

Billings City Administrator Weekly Report

February 4, 2023

1. **City Council/Leadership Team Retreat** – Monday's agenda includes selecting either March 24 & 25 or March 31 & April 1. The facilitator has asked that each of you answer a few questions to help us prepare.
 - a. Describe clearly the two outcomes you want to have accomplished during the retreat.
 - b. What do you want to walk away knowing and feeling about our time together?
2. **Semi-Annual Reports** – The semi-annual reports for BIRD, Downtown Billings Partnership, Parks & Rec, Public Works and SBURA are attached. The PCSD Annual Report can be found at the following link <https://indd.adobe.com/view/3b50b4cf-cfde-4c47-84b3-9419b3df1169>
3. **Legislative and Operations Committees** – both committees met this week. Each of the six criminal justice bills the city is supporting continue making their way through the process; land use bills are starting to be introduced; most of the budget and tax bills are anticipated soon. The Operations Committee met and reviewed the city hall and two vacant lots surrounding the Burger Dive RFP.
4. **Parks, Trails & Recreation Group** – Over the past two Fridays, a group of community leaders have been discussing recommendations on parks, trails, and recreation investments. Councilmembers Rupsis, Boyett, Shaw, and parks and admin staff are also at the table.
5. **Early Childhood Visioning** – Riverstone hosted the third meeting of local service providers to discuss what gaps exist to help children thrive. Home visitations are some of the most successful evidence-based programs.
6. **Next Week's Meeting/Task Forces**
 - a. Aviation & Transit Board Meeting, Tuesday, February 7th 5:30 PM Airport Administration Conference Room 217
 - b. Council Legislative Committee, Wednesday, February 8th 4:00 pm City Hall Conference Room, 210 N. 27th Street.
7. **From the PIO Desk:**

Your questions wanted for public safety Q&A series.

<https://www.billingsmt.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2435>

City of Billings in the news

Police

Two males shot in alley near West High School in Billings

<https://realnewsmontana.com/ixp/124/p/two-males-shot-in-alley-near-west-high-school-in-billings/>

Two men hospitalized after shooting near West High School

https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/two-men-hospitalized-after-shooting-near-west-high-school/article_f3ebfb7a-9f4d-11ed-a015-370022c16f15.html

Billings woman shoots two men during attack outside residence.

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/crime-watch/billings-woman-shoots-two-men-during-attack-outside-her-residence>

Council

Concerned citizens pushing Montana to lift red-light traffic camera ban.

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/local-news/concerned-citizens-pushing-montana-to-lift-red-light-traffic-camera-ban>

Billings Chamber of Commerce announces DEII graduates.

https://www.kulr8.com/news/billings-chamber-of-commerce-announces-deiii-graduates/article_60c57e66-a1aa-11ed-8020-8f9e0d98cb84.html

Billings volunteers survey and count to help homeless.

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/local-news/billings-volunteers-survey-and-count-to-help-homeless>

Fire

Apartment evacuated after fire in Billings.

https://www.nonstoplocal.com/billings/news/apartment-evacuated-after-fire-in-billings/video_c83b4d43-0c7a-586a-9323-90fab20e3d8b.html

Photo: Fire Department battles house fire in Alkali Creek

https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/photo-fire-department-battles-house-fire-in-alkali-creek/article_23a3acdc-a1ab-11ed-8b7f-6bc4709133e2.html

Public Works

‘Give us a little space.’ Equipment operator reminds drivers to give snowplows and sand trucks room to work.

https://www.nonstoplocal.com/billings/news/give-us-a-little-space-equipment-operator-reminds-drivers-to-give-snowplows-and-sand-trucks/article_08ca04b1-7618-5444-9305-b5650d17a7b9.html

BIL

Flights at Billings Logan International Airport temporarily grounded Wednesday as many noticed an unidentified object in the sky.

https://www.nonstoplocal.com/billings/news/flights-at-billings-logan-international-airport-temporarily-grounded-wednesday-as-many-noticed-an-unidentified-object/article_56aa255f-1b1f-5766-b37d-e410e580fc09.html

Updated: Flights resume after being grounded around Billings

https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/updated-flights-resume-after-being-grounded-around-billings/article_6196b8a0-a27c-11ed-b11c-d3dfc0244c41.html

Missoula now Montana’s 2nd busiest airport, Billings falls to 4th.

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/montana-news/missoula-now-montanas-2nd-busiest-airport-billings-falls-to-4th>

Planning & Community Services

Billings’ first artist-in-residence gets to work.

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/local-news/billings-first-artist-in-residence-gets-to-work>

Parks & Rec

Two new trails to be constructed in Billings by fall 2023.

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/local-news/two-new-trails-to-be-constructed-in-billings-by-fall-2023>

Push continues for new \$98 million multi-use rec center in Billings.

https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/push-continues-for-new-98-million-multi-use-rec-center-in-billings/article_17bffca6-9dbc-11ed-a014-eb16da72000a.html

Bi-Annual Report July 2022 – December 2022

The BIRD has had a productive year in 2022. We are actively working towards goals set through our Urban Renewal Plan and Master Plan. Below is a summary of activities that are examples of the success we have seen.

Crime Reduction:

- A. Graffiti removal projects throughout the district
- B. Receipt of \$25,000 grant from the Bloomberg Foundation for their Asphalt Art Program. Installation of 30,000 square feet of artwork around North Park to increase positive events and environment for that area has been complete and delineators ordered.
- C. Project Green Light still available.

Urban Renewal Goals:

- A. Rimrock broke ground on \$26 million dollar facility.
- B. Board member restructuring: Sam Westerman (President) Keith Robinson (Vice-President), Lucy Aspinwall (Treasurer, new member), Melissa Zimmermann (Secretary, new member), Matt McDonnell, and Ken Kunkel.
- C. Continued discussion and pursuit of the 5th Avenue Corridor project to connect the BIRD with the downtown core.
- D. Continued discussion with Big Sky Economic Development for the Brownfields program for the EBURD.
- E. Continuing work with partners to discover connections for an Innovation District in the BIRD.
- F. New Director hired December 14th at The Bird, Michelle Harkins. Zack Terakedis continued in consulting role during transition.

TIF Projects:

Stir LLC TIF fencing Project completed construction in December at their 304 10th Avenue North. BIRD Office 1413 4th Ave. N Billings, MT. 59101 : an www.billingsbird.com istru Michelle Harkins Director 406-200-2110

erty Meeting to discuss streetscape engineeri



Downtown Billings Partnership, Inc.
Part of the Downtown Billings Alliance

Main Office Hours: M-R 9am to 4pm

Semi-Annual Report to Billings City Council

July 1 - December 31, 2022

Monday, January 30, 2023

- Status of the N27th/Downtown Tax Increment Fund for FY 22 - see attached spreadsheet with fund line items
- DBP Highlights and other work in the N27th Street Urban Renewal District
 - Meet new businesses in the downtown area
 - Provide education on TIF and RLF (phone calls, in person, presentations to groups)
 - Process CPTED grants
 - Process Signage grants
 - Process large TIF grants
 - Communicate regularly with City Government and news outlets
 - Meet with new property owners
 - Meet with new investors and developers
 - Collaborate with City Parking as needed
 - Continue promotion/marketing of downtown
 - Tour vacancies with prospective tenants
 - Explore properties for future developments
 - Resume offering of free holiday parking for a second year
 - New Businesses
 - Da Vinci's Workshop at 2706 2nd Ave N
 - Underground Fashion Exchange relocated into 2413 Montana Ave
 - Big Sky Economic Development relocated into 201 N Broadway
 - This House of Books relocated into 116 N 29th Street, Suite B
 - Attorney Title opened at 2223 Montana Ave
 - Studio Ernie opened at 113 N Broadway above Montana Brewing Company
 - Tinkering Tots Learning Center & Bear Tree Ties opened at 3021 3rd Ave N
 - Lakeland moved into 2442 1st Ave N
 - D. James Hats opened at 102 N Broadway
 - eMarie Photography opened at 208 N Broadway
- General Alliance Work
 - Gather photography of downtown scenery, architecture, and activities
 - Install bikes for the Light Bike Trail
 - Awaiting availability of a contractor to install the Portland Loo
 - Order Sails and collect paint quotes for Skypoint
 - Coordinate with owners of properties along the graffiti alley to start with a clean sheet

- Development Project Incentives (TIF grant projects)
 - Completed
 - Billings Community Foundation - Reimbursed
 - Rebel River Signage Grant - Reimbursed
 - Mountain West Aikido Signage Grant - Reimbursed
 - In Progress
 - Art House Cinema - Project deadline is June 30, 2023
 - Downtown Properties, LLC/Stone Building - Project deadline is June 30, 2023
 - R&K Designs LLC/Kibler & Kirch - Project deadline is June 30, 2023
 - Halsten Holdings, LLC/Burger Dive - DA is executed
 - Alberta Bair Theater - ongoing reimbursements throughout FY24
 - Montana Rescue Mission - DA is executed
 - Old Town Flats - Under construction
 - MJ Shanks - Under construction
 - Lincoln Apartments - Under construction
 - Old Billings Hardware Building - Historic Tax Credit Review
 - The Monte - Scheduling reimbursement
 - Sturm & Drake - Scheduling reimbursement
 - Big Sky Economic Development - Scheduling reimbursement
 - 5th Ave Corridor Engineering study by Sanderson Stewart
 - Two-way restoration engineering study by DOWL
 - On Deck
 - TIF inquiries
 - 25 new TIF inquiries (large developments, facade improvements, signage, CPTED, energy efficiency, streetscaping and landscaping, change of use, housing)



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Parks & Recreation Department

Director: Michael Whitaker

Customer Service Coordinator

Administrative Support II

Community Outreach and
Engagement Coordinator

Park Police Officer

Park Planner

Capital Project Manager

**Parks, Urban
Forestry &
Cemetery**

Parks Superintendent

**Recreation & Senior
Services**

Parks,
Supervisor

Parks,
Cemetery
Supervisor

Forestry/
Natural
Resource
Supervisor

Recreation Superintendent

5 Senior
Equipment
Operator/
Maintenance
Workers

1 Senior
Equipment
Operator/
Maintenance
Workers

1 Arborist

3 Recreation Specialists

Recreation & Wellness
Specialist

10 Equipment
Operator/
Maintenance
Workers

2 Equipment
Operator/
Maintenance
Workers

1 Mechanic

Recreation
& Wellness
Support II

Facility
Maintenance
Support II

50 Park Seasonal Employees

Mowers, Bathroom Attendants, Forestry,
Park Attendants, Trash Collector,
Cemetery Attendants

Recreational Seasonal Employees

75	35	20	100
Aquatic Staff	Camp Counselors	Fitness Instructors, Special Interest	Seasonal Coaches Referees

Who we are

Director's Note

It is with great pleasure that I present our 2022 Parks and Recreation Annual Report! Within these pages we showcase our accomplishments of the past year and how we were able to fulfill our mission to provide accessible, safe and quality parks, open spaces and facilities for Billings' residents to recreate and enjoy the many wonderful outdoor opportunities afforded by our great parks system. Here are just a few highlights of what you will find in this report.

- We have completed eight quality-of-life projects totaling nearly \$3.4 million. They include Terry Park picnic shelter and a completely new playground, a new playground at Lillis Park, a large picnic shelter at Optimist Park, a new pool liner at Rose Park, a newly resurfaced trail through Pioneer Park, design concept for a new multi-generational community recreation center near Amend Park and the first phase development of Poly Vista Park. For the coming year we have more than 19 projects under way totaling \$6.6 million.
- After years of planning, fundraising and collaboration between the Billings Parks and Recreation Department and the Landon's Legacy Foundation, we now have a state of the art Miracle League Baseball Field where children of all abilities can play the game of baseball on a custom-designed rubberized surface that accommodates all types of mobility devices, accessible dugouts and an ADA accessible concessions/restroom building.
- This year we saw an increase of 19% participation in our youth and adult recreation programs and a 35% increase in our senior programs.
- At Rose and South Pools we had over 50,400 visitors and over 700 participants in our "Learn to Swim" program with thousands more visitors at the wading pools at Pioneer and Hawthorne Parks.
- Our Staff maintained over 2,700 acres of parkland of which more than 1,200 acres are developed parks and more than 1,200 acres of natural areas. We also maintain 43 miles of paved trails throughout Billings.
- Services at Mountview Cemetery ended the year on par with previous year's averages. Interments decreased by 5% to 116 total. Grave and niche sales remain steady with casket burials accounting for 35% of the total.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Billings Parks and Recreation Department, it is our pleasure to serve you and we look forward to seeing you out in our parks and participating in our many program and activity offerings.

Follow us on social media or download our mobile app to receive up-to-date information on our programs and services or to register for upcoming classes.

Michael Whitaker, CPRP

Director, City of Billings Parks, Recreation and Public Lands

OUR MISSION

WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO

To provide accessible, safe and quality parks, facilities, open spaces and recreational opportunities for all.

OUR VISION

WHAT WE ASPIRE TO BE

To be Montana's Leader in connecting people, nature and healthy lifestyles.

Who we are

91%

of Billings Households
Believe Parks and
Recreation is an
Essential Service.

86%

of Billings Households
responded they **Have**
used a City Park in the
past 12 months.

(National Benchmark is 79%)

- 2017 Parks, Recreation and Public Lands
Comprehensive Master Plan



2,704
acres of parkland



40
playgrounds



16
park shelters



7
neighborhood centers



24
tennis courts



21
basketball courts



188
recreation programs



2
outdoor pools



2
wading pools



5
spraygrounds

We Make Aging Fun

Billings Community and Senior Center

The Recreation Division has been providing recreation programs for our senior population since 1969. Since opening our main facility in 1978, we have provided a wide variety of classes, recreation opportunities, and services to meet the needs of our senior adults. Programs for senior adults consisted of social services, games, and clubs with a small amount of recreation and wellness opportunities. Over the last 5 to 6 years, there has been a shift from a demand in sedentary activity to one allow seniors to stay fit with their peers. This focus will help them to age in place with grace.

There is a need in our community to increase older adult, inclusive programming opportunities which is right in line with a nationwide trend. This has been noted in the Healthy People 2020 and 2030 the aim to increase the number of healthcare and wellness professionals who have specialized training for the active older adult as their needs differ from other segments of the population. Our Recreation & Wellness Specialist hold licenses and certifications in all areas of senior and adult fitness and wellness programming. Our current instructors hold or have on the job training in the active older adult.

Staffing Updates

During 2021 and 2022 we had two full time staff retire. While it can be hard to see staff who were a part of the BCC for so long leave, it left us with an opportunity to look at our operations and what the current needs were. We realized with increasing in Fitness and Wellness programming we needed to increase the duties of support staff would be necessary to grow. In the end of January 2022 we hired Kailey Beeman on as a Recreation and Wellness Support II and she jumped in from day one with a great enthusiasm and willingness to learn. She is certified as a Senior and Fitness Specialist, Senior Yoga and others programs to help expand programming and cover when instructors were out. Previously the only coverage was our Recreation and Wellness Specialist. This allows our department to continue to offer classes on a continuous basis. For seniors fitness programming should not be paused for any length of time as it can lead to decline in strength, endurance and cardiovascular health.

We also brought on a Facilities Support II, Duane who also stepped right in and has helped to keep our facility clean and running in tip top shape. He has a great enthusiasm and passion about his job and keeping our facility safe for our seniors. We truly have an amazing team who are dedicated to helping senior age in place and with grace.



Adult Resource Alliance Program Partnership

Our reach within in the community continues to expand with our formal partnership with the Adult Resource Alliance. We have nearly doubled the programs offered in the Adult Resource Alliance heights and west end location. With increase in program offerings both at the Community and Senior Center and off site locations there has been an increase in overall participation by 35%. The significant increase in participation shows that there is a need and want for senior programming that focuses around safe, fun and effective programming.



Keeping Adults 60+ Independent and Involved

We Make Aging Fun

Program Expansion

Increasing programming came from an observation by Jennifer Brown, our Recreation and Wellness Specialist who noticed that those who were finally returning from before Covid-19 did not have the ability to participate in many of the programs that were offered. This was due to the decrease in strength, endurance, joint stability and overall cardiovascular endurance. It was decided that there was a need for increase inclusive programming that would meet participants where they were at. Chair Strength Training was created to provide inclusive programming for seniors that offered safe, effective and fun ways to gain strength, endurance and much more from the comfort of their chairs. This programming has by far been our biggest launch success. The sessions are filling up quickly and almost too full capacity. We will look to add more of these classes in the coming year as the need and demand call for it.



The Billings and Senior Center had the opportunity to fill a gap in programming for seniors due to several local classes being canceled. There was a request to add in Zumba Gold which allows seniors the opportunity to do low impact Zumba classes. These classes are not only fun the focus on coordination, balance, range of motion, cardiovascular health and a fun way to stay fit with friends. These new classes have brought in new participants who were unaware of the many programs focused toward their direct needs.

With the increasing in programming did not come without its hurdles, as we knew that programming was needed, hiring instructors was a struggle. It took 4 months after launching to hire two new instructors who would be able to teach these classes. During that time both our Recreation and Wellness Specialist and Recreation and Wellness Support stepped in to bridge that gap. Our Recreation and Wellness Specialist averaged teaching 9 to 13 classes a week and our Recreation and Wellness Support II average 6 to 11 classes a week. While this is not ideal it has helped the Recreation division expand its reach into the community. We are now close to being fully staffed for our current offerings. We have an incredible team of dedicated instructors who specialize in fitness and wellness for the active older adult.



1,187
Senior Program
Participants

35%
Increase



Keeping Billings Active

The Miracle League of Billings plays first games!



After years of planning, donations, and the collaboration between the Billings Parks and Recreation Department and the Landon's Legacy Foundation, Phase 1 of Poly Vista Park was completed in August 2022. Phase 1, included Landon's Miracle Field, a special needs baseball field built with a custom-designed rubberized surface, wheelchair accessible dugouts, and ADA accessible bathrooms.

The completely flat playing surface with painted lines and bases, makes it easy for athletes to maneuver around the field. Additionally, a plaque honoring Landon Smith, scoreboard, bleachers, benches, memorial bricks, an archway entrance sign, and recognition of sponsors are also adjacent to the field. The final piece of phase 1 was topped off with paved parking spaces, accessible sidewalks and walkways, and the installment of an automatic sprinkler system on the 4 existing baseball fields at Poly Vista Park.



Opening Day and the first pitch of The Miracle League of Billings kicked off with the first ever game on September 10th at Landon's Miracle Field. 11 athletes played in the inaugural season that lasted 4 weeks and witnessed adults and children all mixed and playing together. The athletes were assisted by volunteer "Buddies" that helped them play the game if needed, directed them around the field, kept them safe, and were there to spend time with them. Each game lasted 3-5 innings, about an hour in time, and played under the official Miracle League rules where each inning everyone hits,

scores, and all games end in a tie. Additionally, all games included the national anthem, announcing the athlete's names when they hit, walk up music, and special appearances from "Homer" the mascot.



It was an extremely successful first season and the Billings Parks and Recreation department greatly looks forward to our spring season, coming April 2023. Please visit scan the QR code for more information.

Keeping Billings Active



1,695
Youth Athletes

1,292
Summer Camp
Participants

1,304
Adult Athletes

1,187
Senior Program
Participants

964
Special Interest
Program Participants

=

6,442
Total Recreation
Program & Activity
Participants

19%
Increase



Keeping Billings Active

Recreation Programs

The Recreation Division had an exceptional 2022. Overall enrollment for programs and activities continued to ascend after last year's record participation totals. Annually the Recreation Division offers programs and activities in a multitude of interests including; youth and adult sports, summer camps, aquatic programming, special interest, wellness and fitness programs geared for older adults. This wide range of activities ensures opportunities for all ages. The Recreation Division takes pride in providing quality programs and activities that are both affordable and accessible to all city residents. All told, the Recreation Division provided safe and enjoyable programs and activities for over 6400 participants.



Youth Summer Camps

Adventure Camp, Magic City Camp, and Pioneer Playhouse are our summer staples. Adventure Camp was maxed out at 40 kids per week since the end of April, with exceptional early registration numbers. Magic City Camp was also maxed out at 24 since the end of April. We saw a big jump in popularity with this camp the last couple years, maxing out enrollment in all weeks for the first time. Playhouse is a very affordable option for kids this age, so we are always full of kids at Playhouse. We were maxed at 45 kids for all 11 weeks at Playhouse as well.



Rose Park Aquatics Camps had 8 weeks of offerings out at Rose Park Swimming Pool. With a similar set up to above mentioned camps, these camps were well attended every week. Junior Lifesavers, Jr. Aquanutz, Lifeguard Certification, and Babysitters Camps.

Recreation did many Specialty Camps as well. Girls Ninja Warrior, Kids in the Kitchen, Youth Cycling Camp, Rocket Camp. These camps were also very successful with enrollment at or near full capacity



ePact Network

This is the third year of implementing this safety network. We have had 100% of household's complete registration at all Playhouse, Magic City, Adventure, and Rose Park Camps. This network setup allows us to run all administrative aspects of each camp through a dedicated camp tablet. This tablet securely contains emergency contacts, allergies, and emergency info for each camper. 350+ unique participants.

Additionally, we have added two more online software programs that will help with the daily scheduling, communication, and the ability for our customers to get real time updates and schedules on a computer or phone. These include a sports facility management software where bookings can be made online and a sports scheduling software that can automatically create league schedules, tournament brackets, and much more.

Keeping Billings Active

Youth Summer Sport Camps

Youth Sports Camps: Had many well attended offerings in the Summer of 2022. Camps included Golf, Cheer, Sports Sampler, Basketball, Volleyball, Flag Football, Soccer, and Lacrosse.

1,695
Youth Athletes

235
Youth Sports Camp
Participants



Youth Sports

Billings Parks and Recreation prides itself on providing quality, low-cost, introductory level youth sports to the Billings Community. The philosophy of each of our youth sports programs is built on the following principals: player safety, fundamentals, learning, growth/development, and having fun!

All seasons and sports run roughly 2 months and consist of 2 practices per week and 5 game days. Practices range from an hour to an hour and a half in length and games are approximately 45 minutes to an hour with a continuous running clock. The key to any successful program is the people that execute the programming. Each sport requires us to bring on about 10-15 coaches, 2-4 officials, and 5-8 site coordinators. The Recreation Division continues its longstanding partnership with School District 2, utilizing the 6 Middle School gymnasiums and Orchard Elementary to provide these sports, not including NFL Flag Football.



NFL Flag Football

NFL Flag Football continued to show its popularity with approximately 125 participants. Practices were offered at the following Billings parks: Castle Rock, Hawthorne, Optimist, Gorham, Veterans, Centennial, and Country Manor. Games were conducted at Centennial Park for the 2nd year in a row. This program utilizes volunteers from the community to coach.



Girls Volleyball

Grades 4th-6th had 168 girls participate in practice twice a week and games at Orchard Elementary. This program is designed to provide the opportunity to learn and develop basic fundamentals, build self-confidence, emphasize teamwork, and promote good sportsmanship.



Boys Basketball

2022 started with our 4th-6th grade Boys Basketball program that had about 161 participants. Game were played at Orchard Elementary on Saturdays. This is a great program for those newer to the game of basketball and who would like to learn fundamental skills.



Girls Basketball

Finally, Girls Basketball moved to 3rd-6th grade and concluded our Youth Sports year with a total of 65 participants. This is a great program for those newer to the game of basketball and would like to learn fundamental skills. Participants had the choose between six middle school practice locations! Teams played games on Saturdays for 5 weeks.

Keeping Billings Active

Tennis Programs

Billings Parks and Recreation had another successful year of tennis programming in 2022. We provided 24 unique tennis programs for both youth and adults throughout the calendar year. New programming for 2022 included the addition of Future Stars Super Saturday, a one-day non-elimination junior event held in partnership with the Elks Tennis Center. 2022 was the second year of the Junior Varsity tennis program provided in partnership with School District II and all three high school tennis teams. Coaches were able to run “no cut” programs and send all non-varsity athletes to JV practices every Monday and Wednesday held by USPTA Professionals on Billings Parks and Recreation Staff. This program worked with 24 athletes through the tennis season who otherwise would have been cut from their schools programs. In turn, keeping these students involved at the instructional level during the season led to our summer high school programs seeing an increased enrollment of these would have been “cut” athletes. This program not only helped build numbers in our instructional programs through the summer, but allows high school tennis in Billings to grow and strengthen the school’s programs.

2021 Total Tennis Participants

- 239** Tennis Academy Junior Beginner-Intermediate
- 33** Tennis Academy Junior High Performance
- 38** Tennis Academy Adult Programs
- 14** End of Summer Junior Non-Elimination Tournament
- 114** Tennis is Elementary (Winter and Fall)
- 10** Future Stars Super Saturday
- 9** Ten and Under Tennis @ North Park Center

Pickleball Programs

Billings Parks and Recreation greatly expanded Pickleball offerings and programming in 2022. Utilizing our stand alone Pickleball complex at Lillis Park and our indoor court at North Park Center, we offered beginner adult boot camps, intermediate level lessons, private lessons, group lessons and

tournaments throughout the year. The outdoor pickleball season kicked off in May with our annual Pickleball Doubles Tournament at Lillis Park. We had over 50 participants in 3 divisions. Throughout the summer, we had over 100 individuals participate in beginner pickleball boot camps and lessons.



Serve Tennis for Pickleball

2022 marked the first calendar year of use of the online reservation software for the Lillis Park Pickleball Complex. This free online software, provided by the United States Tennis Association and its partnership with municipal run facilities, allows for players to book courts at desired times online. This spring and summer we had 175 unique reservations for Pickleball courts.

Keeping Billings Active

Adult Sports

Adults sports continued to be popular throughout 2022 with approximately 1,000 individuals participating in a variety of sports including City League Basketball, Adult Soccer, and Adult Volleyball. Additionally, Pickleball, one of the fastest growing sports in the world, kicked off a tremendous summer with a tournament, boot camps, and lessons.



Adult Soccer

We ran a successful spring co-ed season from April to the beginning of June. We had 7 teams compete at Amend Park on Sundays for this season. After this season most teams roll right into the summer season which goes through August. The Summer Season had 6 teams. We finished out the 2022 year with Fall Soccer which had 6 teams. Total of 16 teams and 110 Unique Participants.

City League Basketball

City League Basketball begins the yearly programming campaign at Parks and Recreation. 48 men's and 10 women's teams comprised the 58 team League. All skill levels find a place to compete in our league, with divisions from Competitive, Masters, and purely Recreational to choose from. Each team averages 8 players for a total of around 465 unique participants

Adult Coed Volleyball

Billings Parks and Recreation provided three seasons of Adult Rec Volleyball in 2022. These programs included Fall and Winter Co-Ed Volleyball and Adult Sand Volleyball in the Summer. These programs saw 53 individual teams (over 200 Individual players) throughout the year.



Keeping Billings Active

Music Programming

Billings Parks and Recreation has continued to provide music based camps and classes through the spring and summer of this year. Through the spring, we offered Adult Piano Lessons at the Rose Park Pool activity room. This class is provided in partnership with the Billings Music Teachers Association and filled both beginner and intermediate sessions. We hosted our 5th Annual Rock Band Camp. This week long camp allows middle school aged students to spend a week learning, rehearsing, and performing as a real live rock group. This camp, hosted at Ben Steele middle school, put on a live concert at Veterans Park at the end of the week.



Shared Facility Use

We are fortunate and grateful to have such a great partnership with School District #2. Through our partnership we are able to offer accessible recreation programs for all ages year round and throughout the entire community.



Youth Scholarships

The Billings Parks and Recreation Department is pleased to offer a Youth Scholarship Fund that provides an avenue for under-privileged children the opportunity to participate in programs and activities throughout the entire year. Over the last 4 years, we have received a generous contribution from Scheels to assist in providing financial assistance to youth in our community. Over the past 4 years, we have awarded \$9,968 in scholarships that allowed 164 children to participate in activities and programs they may not have been able to afford otherwise.



Seasonal Employment:

Staffing our programs went very well in 2022. Increased pay helped with quality applications and retention in all of our programs. This year we had 35 full time seasonals and 2 interns working camps this Summer. With lifeguards, counselors, coaches, bus drivers, officials, and site coordinators and scorekeepers for youth sports, the Recreation Division employs well over 200 people for the year.

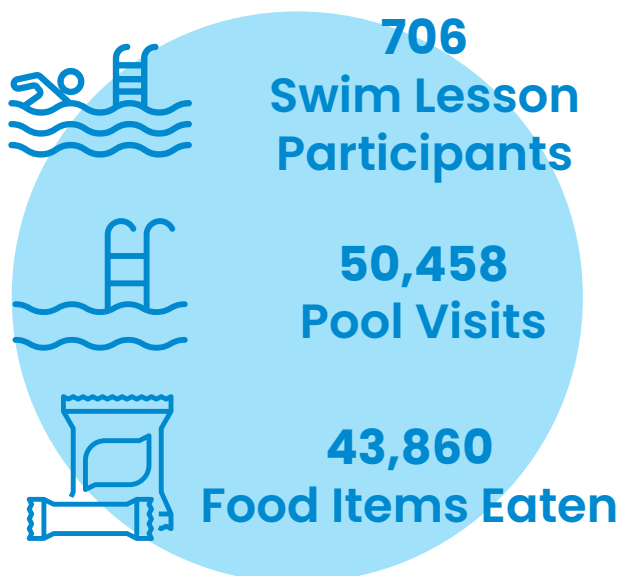
Staying Cool at the Pool



Summer Aquatic Operation

The Recreation Division oversees the staffing and operations of the Rose Park and South Park pools, as well as the Pioneer Park and Hawthorne Park wading pools. We employ 45-55 lifeguards annually, all of which receive rigorous American Red Cross Lifeguard and CPR/ AED training before the pools open. We ensure each guard receives the proper training they need to respond to any situation that arises. This year, our lifeguards supervised 50,458 visitors at Rose and South Park pools and thousands

more visitors at Pioneer Park and Hawthorne Park wading pools. Three hundred and twenty one (321) reduced price pool passes were sold in 2022 to help residents in low-income households cool off on our hot summer days. In total, 90+ seasonal aquatic employees (lifeguards, instructors, managers, cashiers, concession workers) are employed at the aquatic facilities annually. Most of these employees are high school students, college students, and School District 2 employees.



Staying Cool at the Pool

Aquatic Programs & Swim Lessons

To go hand and hand with recreational open swim for children and families, the Recreation Division also provided popular aquatic programming, which included 706 children enrolled in our seven week American Red Cross Learn to Swim program, 43 adult lap swimmers, and 91 children enrolled in our all-day aquatic camps. The aquatic staff was commended for doing a tremendous job during another eventful summer, keeping our facilities safe and enjoyable for the community.



Dog Days of Summer

We celebrated our eighth annual Dog Days of Summer! On the closing day of the pool, we close the pool to human swimming and open it to our four-legged friends. The entry fees are waived for humans, but pet owners are charged \$4 per dog. Four hundred and twenty four (424) dogs and their owners helped us celebrate our eighth annual Dog Day of Summer, on the last day of the pool season, breaking our previous record of 407 dogs. The event has become a community favorite and a tradition that is sure to last for years!



Wading Pools

Pioneer Park wading pool and Hawthorne Park wading pool operate free of charge for the public to use. These facilities are extremely popular for small children, and widely used by day care programs throughout the community. Two lifeguards supervise both wading pools from 12-6pm daily.



Pool Liner Replacement at Rose

Upon the completion of the 2022 summer swim season, the Recreation Division managed a project to replace the vinyl liner at Rose Park Pool. The liner was last replaced in 2010 and carries a ten year warranty. The project was completed on September 10th and will be ready for opening day on June 7th in 2023.



Completed Projects

Terry Park Playground Replacement and Picnic Shelter

Improvement to Terry Park were completed early this spring. Parks Staff installed the fall protection under the playground equipment as a cost saving measure. These upgrades included a picnic shelter, new playground equipment and fall protection and an ADA accessible sidewalk that connects the perimeter park sidewalk to the shelter, playground and public restrooms located at the nearby fire station. Along with the existing splash pad, this park has become a popular destination for families to enjoy many summer activities.

Playground Budgeted Amount: \$300,000

Source: PD #1

Picnic Shelter Budgeted Amount: \$50,000

Source: Cell Tower Revenue

Payments To-Date: \$329,632.39



Lillis Park Playground Replacement

Improvements to the Lillis Park playground were completed in July. A feature of the new play equipment is an extra wide slide where children can enjoy racing their friends side by side to the bottom. This improvement has dramatically increased the play value and popularity of the playground. As a cost saving measure, Parks Staff installed the fall protection under the playground equipment.

Playground Budgeted Amount: \$300,000

Source: PD #1

Payments To-Date: \$278,714.87

Optimist Park Picnic Shelter

Construction of a new picnic shelter at Optimist Park was completed late this fall. The South Billings Urban Renewal Association (SBURA) partnered with the Parks and Recreation Department to fund this project. This venue will accommodate medium to large gatherings for a variety of groups including family reunions, corporate picnics, church groups and school activities.

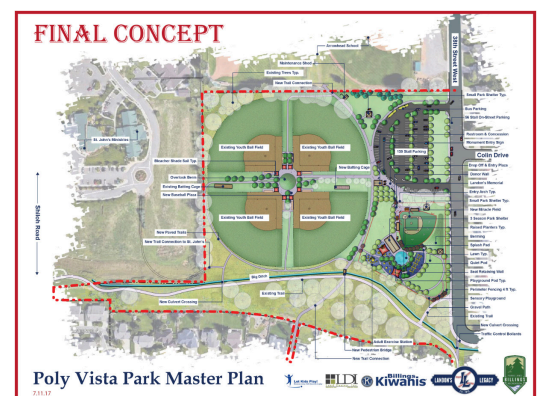
Budgeted Amount: \$304,978

Source: SBURA

Payments To-Date: \$269,707.77

Poly Vista Park Phase 1 Development

The Parks and Recreation Department in partnership with the Landon's Legacy Foundation has completed phase 1 of Poly Vista Park development. These improvements include a Miracle League Baseball Field, a restroom and concession facility, mass grading, parking and sidewalks, and replacement of the irrigation system at the existing four-play baseball fields. A grand opening was held on August 17th. This fall the Recreation Division programed the first Miracle League season giving children with disabilities the opportunity to play the game of baseball.



Budgeted Amount: \$1,000,000 (City Funds) \$1,000,000 (Private Contract)

Source: PD #1/Private Donations

Payments To-Date: \$961,008.67 (City Funds) \$1,000,000 (Private Contract)

Developing our Parks

Coulson Park Development Phase 1

The first phase of development at Coulson Park which includes the location of an ADA-accessible modular concrete restroom structure, a boat ramp, parking, and a picnic area, has been put on hold due to construction of the I-90 bridges over the Yellowstone River and the need to use the north end of Coulson Park for construction staging. The contractor will provide \$70,000 of in-kind work on the boat launch as their compensation for temporary use of the park. They are scheduled to be completed in 2024.

Budgeted Amount: \$110,000

Source: NRDP/YRRP

Payments To-Date: \$3,550.55



Coulson Park Development Phase 2

The second phase of Coulson Park is proceeding. This work includes ADA upgrades to the parking lot, ADA access to the existing trail, picnic shelter, soft surface trails to a designated "Artist Point" and "River Access" next to the Yellowstone River. Design work for this area is nearly complete. A permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been applied for and once it has been approved bidding will take place. Construction is anticipated to begin spring of 2023.

Budgeted Amount: \$250,000

Source: NRDP/YRRP/BSEDA Fund Raiser

Payments To-Date: \$23,070.80



Improving our Parks

Central Park Tennis Court Replacement

Work has begun on replacement of the tennis courts at Central Park. A contract was awarded in October and demolition operations are ongoing as weather permits. Construction will resume next spring with an anticipated completion summer of 2023. This project will also provide ADA accessibility to the tennis courts along with stripping and nets to convert one of the courts to 4 pickleball courts. Lighting for the courts will also be provided. The City has been awarded a total of \$394,156.67 in LWCF grants from Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks for this project.

Budgeted Amount: \$894,156.67

Source: PD #1/LWCF

Payments To-Date: \$69,847



Castle Rock Park Playground Replacement

The Heights Task Force and Council Members Owen and Neese, representing the Heights along with assistances from the Parks and Recreation Department have selected new playground equipment for Castle Rock Park. Due to supply chain issues the last shipment of equipment is scheduled for June of 2023. The site construction work to develop the play pod which will house the new equipment has been built. A playground equipment installer has been selected and will begin installation as soon as the equipment arrives. Completion is scheduled for summer 2023.

Budgeted Amount: \$596,499.96

Source: PD #1/Cash - in - Lieu Funds

Payments To-Date: \$184,397.27

Ponderosa Park Irrigation Replacement

The irrigation system at Ponderosa Park is an antiquated manual system and needs to be replaced. Construction began in September with the new system substantially installed. Supply chain issues have delayed the shipment of the pump and well system. Delivery is anticipated spring of 2023 with completion of the new irrigation system in June.

Budgeted Amount: \$215,000

Source: PD #1

Payments To-Date: \$187,552

Arrowhead Park Playground Replacement

The playground at Arrowhead Park is in need of replacement. Along with replacing the playground equipment, an ADA accessible route to the playground and concrete curbing around the playground will be constructed. Currently construction documents are being developed with the goal of construction in the Summer/Fall 2023.

Budgeted Amount: \$200,000

Source: PD #1

Payments To-Date: \$2,848.39

North Park Playground Replacement

Play equipment at North Park is obsolete and is in need of replacement. Staff is working on playground layouts that will be voted on by Billings residents to select the most preferred concept to install. The new equipment is currently scheduled to be installed Summer/Fall 2023.

Budgeted Amount: \$400,000

Source: PD #1

Payments To-Date: \$0.00

Community Development Block Grant Projects

Pioneer Park Restroom Repair/Upgrades

The restroom at Pioneer Park will be receiving repairs and upgrades to improve its appearance and functionality. Measures will be taken to seal the walls, repainting and enhanced touchless faucet controls.

Budgeted Amount: \$14,000

Source: CDBG/CDBG-CV

Payments To-Date: \$0.00

Comanche Park Playground and ADA route

Comanche Park will see a new playground equipment and ADA accessibility upgrades. The existing playground is very outdated and many parts have been removed, reducing the play value. The new playground will also include an ADA Accessible walkway to the equipment. The new playground equipment was selected through an online citizen voting contest and has been ordered. Site improvement and installation of the new equipment is scheduled for summer of 2023.

Budgeted Amount: \$240,000

Source: CDBG/CDBG-CV

Payments To-Date: 1,729.73



Pioneer Park Heritage Trail

This route is now part of the City's first neighborhood bike way, a 4+ mile route connecting residents living in housing of all income levels to everyday needs such as schools, health care, healthy foods, jobs, etc. The route runs from the North Park area to a little north of Rose Park connecting 3 community parks. The section of trail running through Pioneer Park was identified as the weak link due to its condition, reducing the effectiveness of the route for more cautious users such as seniors, families, and people with disabilities. This trail section was recently re-graded and re-paved making it easier and safer to use. The restrooms near the tennis courts at Pioneer will also receive upgrades to improve the condition, functionality and appearance of the facility.

Budgeted Amount: \$159,600

Source: CDBG/CDBG-CV

Payments To-Date: \$126,686

Community Development Block Grant Projects

The Parks and Recreation Department is partnering with Community Development to locate new amenities and upgrades in several parks throughout the City. Funding for these projects comes from Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and Community Development Block Grants – Corona Virus (CDBG - CV). The goal of these projects are to encourage healthy activity outdoors and promote social distancing to reduce the effect of the Corona Virus Pandemic. Community Development is working with our Park Planner to develop and administer the federal funding.

North Park Restroom

The existing restroom located in the center of the park will be replaced with a new concrete modular structure and will include features such as touch-less restroom fixtures and automatic lighting. An engineering consultant is working on designing the pad the restroom will sit on along with an ADA accessible sidewalks around the building. Installation of this facility is scheduled for summer of 2023.

Budgeted Amount: \$260,600

Source: CDBG/CDBG-CV

Payments To-Date: \$3,700

North Park Adult Exercise Equipment & Shade Structure

A new feature coming to North Park will be an outdoor fitness zone. Located near the existing splash pad and playground, this new amenity will offer numerous exercise stations where people can work out and get fit in a beautiful park setting. Also families can enjoy the park while the children play on the playground equipment or splash in the water features all while parents can work out and keep an eye on their children. Design is under way for this new venue and is anticipated to be installed summer of 2023.

Budgeted Amount: \$252,814

Source: CDBG/CDBG-CV

Payments To-Date: \$1,729.73



North Park Center and Zimmerman Center ADA Accessibility and Touchless Features

The North Park Center and the Zimmerman Center at Pioneer Park will receive upgrades that will improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities, as well as install touch-less features to restrooms and kitchen areas. Since these facilities host our summer camp programs and is in use 6-7 days per week, these upgrades will add to the convenience and sanitation of the facilities.

Budgeted Amount: \$42,000

Source: CDBG/CDBG-CV

Payments To-Date: \$0.00

Upcoming Projects

Castle Rock Park North Parking Lot and Restroom

As part of implementing the master plan for Castle Rock Park, funding has been approved to retain a consultant to do design work for improvements to the north parking lot and restroom. The design and bid package will be completed in the first quarter of 2023 and once construction funding is available, will go out for bid. Construction is anticipated to begin shortly after the start of the 2024 fiscal year which is after July 1, 2023.

Design Budgeted Amount: \$100,000

Source: PD #1

Payments To-Date: \$7,271.33

Construction Budgeted amount: \$900,000 (based on budget authorization by Council)

Source: PD #1

Cottonwood Park Master Plan

Cottonwood Park is a 39 acre community park located on the west that was donated to the City by Don and Betsy Forbs in 2003. As the Community grows west the need for a community park in that area has increased significantly. Recently a consultant was hired to develop a master plan for this park. By developing a Council approved master plan, it will identify the wishes and needs of the community and be a guiding document as the park is developed. Work is under way with a scheduled completion summer 2023.

Budgeted Amount: \$125,000

Source: Cash – in – Lieu

Payments To-Date: \$7,038

Multiple Parks Irrigation Improvements

Three additional park irrigation systems will be replaced and converted to automatic systems. They are Grandview, Millice and Gorham Parks. By automating these systems it will allow the parks to be watered at night allowing for more recreational use during the day and will eliminate the need for a park attendant to manually set and move the irrigation heads during the day. Also due to technology advances the systems can run more efficiently saving on electrical costs.

Budgeted Amount: \$924,750

Source: PD #1

Payments To-Date: \$0.00

Highland Park Playground Replacement

Play equipment at Highland Park has reached the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced. Staff is working on playground layouts that will be voted on by elementary students from a nearby school to select the most preferred concept to install. It is anticipated that this project will be completed fall of 2023.

Budgeted Amount: \$206,000

Source: PD #1

Payments To-Date: \$0.00

Upcoming Projects

Multi-Generational Community Recreation Center

Since December 2021 the Parks and Recreation Department has worked with our consultant on a year-long concept design study for a multi-generational community recreation center located on property adjacent to Amend Park. The goal of this study has been to create a multi-generational recreation facility that best reflects the needs of our community, best practices for recreational programming, site design and a defined budget. Our consultant has worked closely with the Parks and Recreation Department, a Core Committee of community representatives and City Administration on this study. The process has been inclusive and collaborative to ensure that all ideas are explored and tested. The primary objectives include:

- To have a facility that is visionary and makes an impact on our community – let's build it right.
- The facilities need to create a balance in meeting the needs of our local residents while at the same time attracting sports tourism opportunities.
- The program spaces need to reflect what the residents will support and what they have defined as the essential unmet needs for recreation in our community.
- The facility should seek to maximize revenue generation.

The outcome of this robust process has been to ensure that it has been inclusive and genuinely reflective of our community by reaching out to Billings residents through community engagement, meetings and a statistically valid survey. This process has defined the vision for this exceptional amenity in our community.

The study was presented to the City Council at a Work Session on October 17th for discussion and their input. Since that time, the Core Committee has made a recommendation that 2 ice arenas be a part of the overall package for the community center.

If adopted and constructed, this recreation center will provide a tremendous variety of indoor recreational opportunities, provide for exceptional quality of life and put Billings on the map as a regional destination for sports tourism for the citizens of Billings.





Maintaining our Parks

Centennial Drainage

Parks Division staff began work this fall on drainage issues at Centennial dog park. One by the water station and the other the drainage swell to the north designed for future storm water detention. The naturally high clay soils prevent water from rainfall and sprinkler irrigation draining properly and not causing mud holes which dogs seem to love, but their owners not so much. A large low-lying area was excavated and filled back in with drain rock to allow water to dissipate.



Irrigation Repairs

Trouble shooting and repairs are a constant task performed by the Parks staff. From a new small $\frac{1}{2}$ " drip systems to large 30 year old systems with 8 inch mainlines, Parks staff deals with ongoing repairs to keep water flowing and parks healthy.

Several systems within the parks are surpassing 30 years and require constant maintenance. Proper maintenance makes the systems more efficient not only keeping parks looking good but conserving water.



Poly Vista Opening

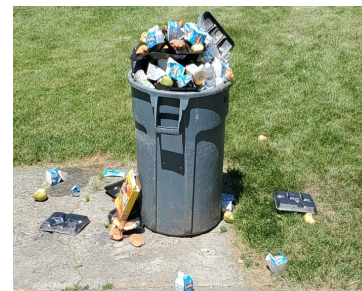
Parks worked hand in hand with contractors on site to intergrade the new construction with the existing park spaces. New irrigation system and controls were handed over to the Parks department and will be in full use going forward into 2023. The Miracle Field at Poly Vista is a fantastic addition to the amenities offered within our parks system. The updated irrigation system will greatly improve the quality for the existing fields and improve player safety.



Maintaining our Parks

Trash Removal

Parks facilitates trash service for all park users, as well as special events, park permits, and shelter rentals. Trash removal occurs 7 days a week during the busy spring/summer/fall seasons.



Turf Management

Turf management and care is constantly ongoing. To bring an area up to standards is a multi-year operation in order to establish a healthy and robust turf that will withstand the high use seen in parks. To keep parks healthy, irrigating, mowing, fertilizing, weed spraying, aerating, and topdressing are always being performed by Parks staff. Staff concentrates on turf areas that receive the most traffic like sports fields and large open areas. Without the necessary care the grass will become weaker and less dense allowing weeds to take over and become a safety issue for users.

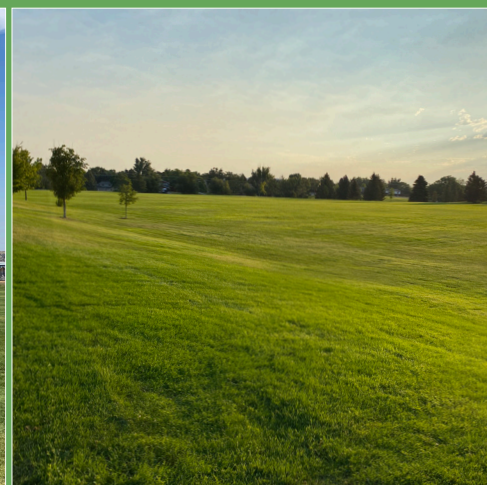
Multi-Use Turf



Sportsfield Turf



Open Space/Sportsfield



Veterans Ice

Ice rink at Veterans Park was open early in 2022. Parks staff once again started building up the ice in the late fall/winter of 2022, making it two consecutive years of ice at Veterans Park. Temperatures must be consistently below 20 degrees to establish ice. The warm ground and sun add challenges to keeping the ice skate able. The Parks Division always tries to have a good sheet of ice before schools let out for winter break.



Maintaining our Playgrounds

The Staff Training

Parks Division continually trains and re-certifies Certified Playground Safety Inspectors (CPSI) on staff. This year three Parks staff traveled to Bismark ND for certification. Seven Park Division staff are currently Certified Playground Safety Inspectors. Staff also stays current on pesticide applicator training and nine are licensed through the Montana Department of Agriculture.

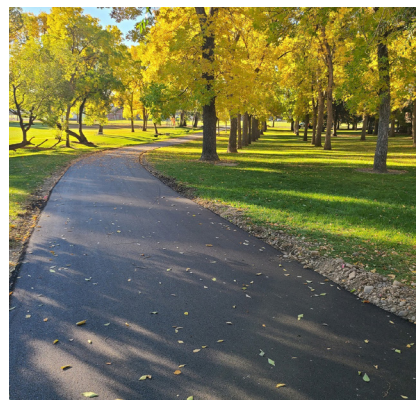


Maintaining our Trails

As the Heritage trail system develops throughout the community, it will provide recreational opportunities as well as an alternate transportation corridor. Benches, picnic tables, shelters, trail heads, signage and restrooms are in place or being added to enhance the trail.

As part of our trail maintenance program, the Parks Division mows trail edges once per month in natural area parks during the growing season to prevent tall grasses from encroaching onto the trails. All hard surface trails were swept four times during the summer to remove debris and materials that may be hazardous to trail users.

Additionally, we do our best to keep the trails open year round, removing snow from all paved multi-use trails throughout the winter months. The trail system is checked daily for trash, graffiti, and other potential problems.



43

Miles of Paved
Multi-Use Trails

10

Miles of Soft Surface
Trails

95

Snow removal locations
including Heritage Trail
system

Multipurpose Trail

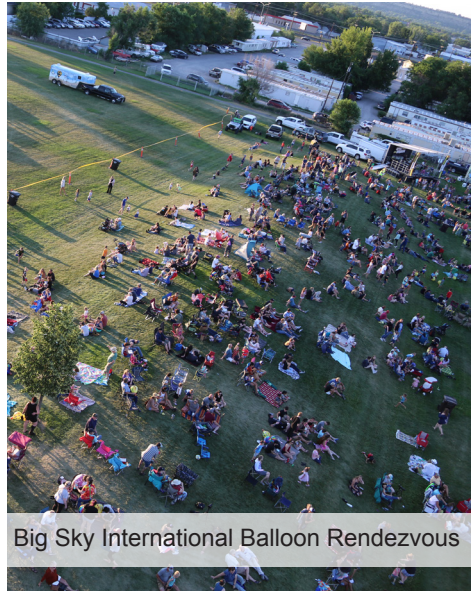
The multipurpose trail that replaces the trail lost to erosion in Riverfront Park has begun. The trail is paid for from a grant from the Department of Natural Resources under the Natural Resource Damage Program. City of Billings Public Works Department is assisting with the management of this trail construction. The project includes a bridge across the City County Drain and will connect with a trail that will continue East from the old Washington Street.



Events in our Parks



406 Race Series



Big Sky International Balloon Rendezvous



Billings Night of Worship

Community Connections

In a typical year, the Parks and Recreation Department works with around 80 organizations throughout the community to facilitate events in our parks, ranging from large community events, weddings, family reunions and much more!

145 Park Use Permits issued

Company picnic, fun runs, weddings, family reunions, easter egg hunts & much more!

270 Building & Crafthouse Rentals

Basketball practice, family dinners, church service, birthday parties & much more!

445 Shelter Rentals

Sports dinners, bible studies, family gatherings, birthday parties & much more!

28 Soundstage Rentals

Alive After 5, Burn the Point, HOA picnics & much more!

Shakespeare in the Parks

To be celebrating 50 seasons of amazing performances is truly a special accomplishment. In celebration of their 50th anniversary season, they put on 2 amazing performances, and presented the Parks and Recreation department with an award recognizing 50 amazing years of Shakespeare in the Park!



Patrolling Our Parks

Billings Parks Police Officer

Another year has come and gone and the Billings Parks Officer Nathan Schara was busy as ever. Officer Schara joined our team back in January of 2021. Officer Schara has worked for the Billings Police Department for the past 6 years.

Officer Schara's duties include patrolling parks/trails, working with parks employees and building public relationships around the parks. A large part of this includes working with the vagrant population, enforcing city parks laws, and special parks events.

Many of Officer Schara's citations included but were not limited to alcohol use within the parks without a permit and camping overnight in the parks. Officer Schara has continued to work with the Downtown Billings Alliance Officers to find permanent solutions for those living on the streets.

Officer Schara is looking forward to building more public relationships and continuing to work with community members to keep parks safe and assisting those in need through 2023.



39

Cases

21

Arrests

11

Traffic Stop
Citations

6

Municipal
Infractions

33

City Ordinance
Cites

704

Dispatched
Calles

(includes helping other officers and
creating calls)

Engaging our Community

Volunteer Programs and Projects

The Parks and Recreation Department formally began a volunteer program in 2013 when the Volunteer Coordinator was hired. The program began with the focus of connecting community members to volunteer experiences in the Parks and Recreation Department. The duties quickly evolved into the broader focus of community outreach. The outreach program includes special events, volunteer projects and programs, community garden oversight, grant writing and special projects. Through these community engagement efforts,

citizens have the chance to learn more about the department's mission while getting involved through volunteerism. Volunteer groups make up the bulk of the projects that take place during the year. Some of the volunteer groups that we typically work with include churches, service clubs, athletic teams, corporate volunteers and the universities. They complete a wide-variety of projects throughout the park system. Common projects include painting structures, graffiti removal, rims cleanups, planting trees and helping at the community gardens.



Earth Day

In celebration of Earth Day this year, we hosted a Tree Planting volunteer opportunity at Mountview Cemetery to continue our commitment to enhancing the natural beauty of the cemetery. As we look to expand into unused sections of the cemetery, we planted 19 trees on this day to beautify these sections. Burial locations near trees are one of the most requested settings when individuals select graves to purchase. Mountview Cemetery is committed to providing the community an attractive, peaceful sanctuary to celebrate and commemorate the lives of our loved ones. Mountview Cemetery is the largest and oldest continually operated cemetery in the region and the cemetery is used daily by walkers, joggers, and people wishing to view birds and wildlife. The oldest part of the cemetery was opened over 135 years ago in the year 1881, and we are still growing with the total future size of about 65 acres.

Downtown Rotary Club Projects

The Downtown Rotary Club volunteered with two projects this summer. One was a rims cleanup at Swords Park, which has become an annual event for the club. The second was a painting project to repaint the picnic shelter located near the western edge of the park near the Rocky Mountain College soccer field. The fresh coat of paint was badly needed as the shelter was beginning to peel to bare wood and would have continued to deteriorate if not for the work of the group.



Engaging our Community

Inclusive Design Doctoral Capstone Project

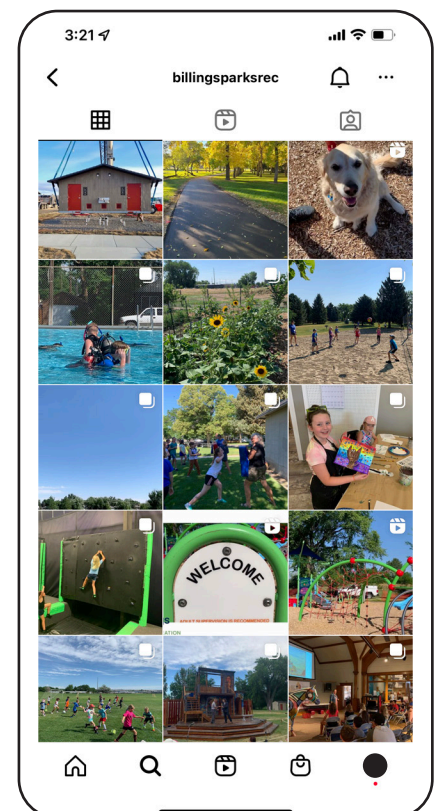
In January Devin Wilkey, an Occupational Therapy Doctoral Student began his project with the Parks and Recreation Department to assess our Parks and Park facilities for inclusive design. Occupational Therapy students receive a unique blend of education and experience working with populations across the lifespan, a variety of conditions, and a focus on performance and participation in the activities of daily life. Because of this background, Occupational Therapists are well suited to serve as consultants for inclusive park design in partnership with other key players such as landscape architects, park planners, people with disabilities, and community members. The resources created for this doctoral project were intended to guide future development and decision making concerning park and playground design, and equip the department with additional knowledge to assist in planning inclusive parks where people of all abilities can play together.

The doctoral capstone project included many components. A needs assessment survey was sent to Billings residents who have a disability, or care for someone with a disability. Education activities were completed concerning the city parks and

people with a disability, and extensive research was conducted on inclusive park design. The student worked with several professionals in the field including Ingrid Kanics, OTR/L, playground inspector, and inclusive design consultant. Select parks were evaluated and reports were prepared for the parks and recreation department. Additional resources were also provided for the Parks and Recreation department. Paul Reinhardt, Billings Parks and Recreation Department Community Outreach and Engagement Coordinator, advised and supervised the project. The Parks evaluated were Castle Rock, Centennial, Central, Hawthorne, North, Optimist, Pioneer, Rose, and South. The selected parks receive high visitation and represent key offerings for the community. However, the parks evaluated do not necessarily represent all the inclusive features available. Playgrounds were emphasized, but general evaluation of park features and amenities was also completed as it is impossible to evaluate inclusive design without considering the broader context of the park. The resulting document provided the department with recommendations, standards, checklists, and evaluation tools to ensure future park projects provide opportunities to be more inclusive to individuals with disabilities.

Social Media Intern

This year, the Parks and Recreation Department hired a social media intern to help oversee and create content for the departments social media platforms. This position, overseen by the Community Outreach and Engagement Coordinator, has helped highlight programs and projects for the department to help raise community awareness of the departments activities and improve engagement with community members. Thanks to the efforts of this position, the department Facebook page reach (number of people who saw our content) during the month of June was 30,446 individuals, and our Instagram reach was 5,003 individuals. Our Facebook page visits also increased with over 4,000 visits in the month of June. We increased our Facebook page followers by 241 individuals and our Instagram page by 92 individuals in June. In today's technology driven world, we have utilized social media as an important tool to keep the community informed of projects, programs, and services the department provides to the community.



Engaging our Community

Arbor Day



The Parks and Recreation Department hosted the Annual Arbor Day Celebration at Castle Rock Park on May 5th! Our parks are home to over 10,000 trees and we understand the many benefits that trees provide to our park users and community as a whole. From providing shade to storm water management, urban temperature regulation to increasing property values, trees have a larger impact on our everyday lives than we often recognize.

After a couple of years of this event being disrupted by COVID, we were able to get back to holding a full event. This year's event included volunteers planting 25 trees at the park, 24 educational booths, and 450 fourth grade students rotating through those booths learning about trees, nature, and our natural environment. All together there were over 100 volunteers at the event! The event concluded with the official Arbor Day Ceremony, and the ceremonial planting of the Arbor Day Tree, this year named "potato" by the students.



Engaging our Community

Refresh the Rims

The Tenth Annual Refresh the Rims Event took place on October 15th! The event had over 200 volunteers who had preregistered for the event to help clean up 6 sections on the top of the Billings' iconic rims. The Parks and Recreation Department partnered with the MSUB Outdoor Adventure Leadership (OAL) Program for the event giving OAL students a chance to hone their leadership, judgment, and guiding skills leading volunteers across the rims. This partnership has been in place since the inception of the event and continues to be a staple of running a successful rims cleanup event of this scale.



Landon's Miracle Field Grand Opening

The Landon's Legacy Foundation was born after Landon Smith's passing in order to keep his amazing spirit alive in our community. In 2013, Marcie Smith approached the City of Billings with the idea of building a Miracle Field at Poly Vista Park. After years of planning, collaboration, and fundraising, the Landon's Legacy Foundation and Billings Parks and Recreation are proud to announce the Grand Opening of Landon's Miracle Field, Billings' first Miracle League Baseball Field! This special needs baseball field is built with custom designed rubberized turf field that accommodates wheelchairs and other adaptive equipment. This phase of development has also provided important park infrastructure improvements, laying the groundwork for future fully accessible park features. Most notably, it has created the opportunity to provide programming to serve children and adults who suffer from any physical or mental disabilities which excludes them

from other baseball leagues. The impacts this project to the Billings Community and surrounding area cannot be understated and we believe that an occasion as momentous as this deserves a proper celebration! The Poly Vista Miracle Field Grand Opening represents the culmination of 9 years of hard work and perseverance, and is the realization of a dream come to reality. The Grand Opening took place on Wednesday, August 17th at 5:00pm. The Grand Opening Committee planned this event to provide fun activities for the whole family, including a live band, free ice cream, food, a dunk tank, photo booth, mascots, and more!



Growing Together

Community Gardens

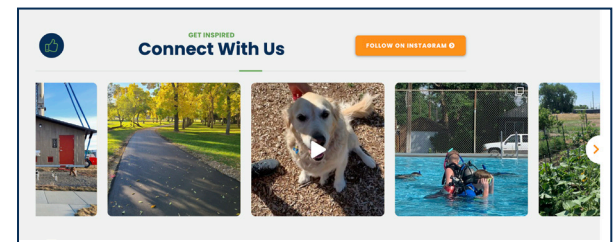
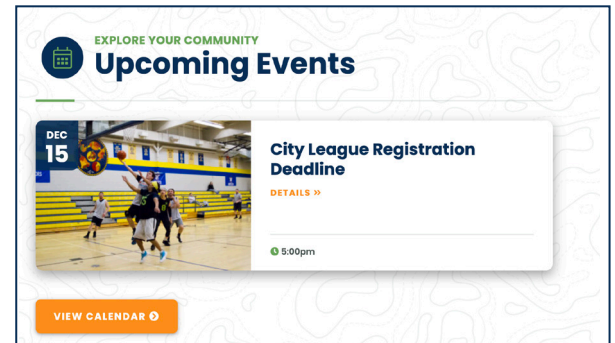
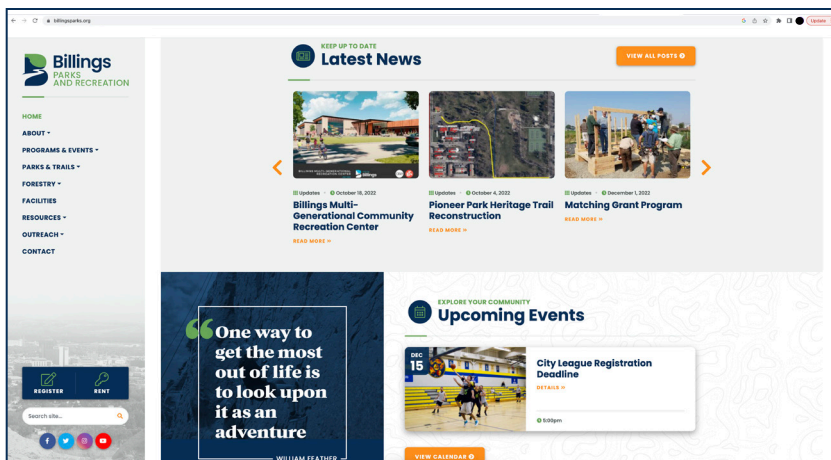
The Amend Park Community garden was in full swing of our 9th gardening season. Parks and Recreation staff works closely with the volunteer Garden Leadership Team to coordinate community garden projects and workdays to improve and maintain the garden. The orientation for the garden took place on Saturday, May 14th after which, the gardeners helped in the first garden workday to prepare the garden and communal spaces.



Communicating with our Community

Website Updates

The BillingsParks.org has seen some small updates that will be sure to have a large impact on how we communicate with our community. Our website now includes an “upcoming events” calendar, which will be updated with upcoming events, recreation programs, and other helpful information for community members looking to stay active during the year. Additionally, we have included an Instagram feed on the bottom of our pages so folks can see the latest photos from our programs, projects, and events. We have kept the “news items” section of our website to keep visitors updated on the latest department news. We hope with these updates that all of the most important information will be just a click away from those looking to stay up to date on Parks and Recreation happenings.



Parks and Recreation Mobile App

For the second year, the Recreation Division continues to enhance and expand our ability to reach and communicate with our current and future customers through our mobile app, Reach Mobile. The app has greatly enhanced the dissemination of upcoming recreational programs/activities, registration and updates about youth and adult sports, city league basketball, tennis programs, fitness classes, and many more. Our ability to bring information directly to our customers' smartphones will only enhance our ability to grow and connect with our community.



Urban Forestry and Natural Areas

Forestry Overview

The Forestry Division is staffed by a City Forester, a full-time Arborist, and 4 seasonal employees. The primary responsibility of the Forestry Division is the care and maintenance of approximately 10,000 trees distributed throughout 47 developed parks covering 1,223 acres, including Mountview Cemetery. In these parks we prune, water, mulch, plant, and remove trees as necessary to maintain a diverse array of attractive trees providing beauty, shade, and more for Billings' residents.

We inspect large trees and trees near areas in which people congregate annually to ensure the safety of park visitors. Additionally, we prune trees on a 7-year cycle to make sure trees are well-maintained and structurally sound, ensuring a growth trajectory that maximizes each trees potential and realizes the most benefits for Billings' taxpayers.

An increasingly important aspect of the Forestry Division's work is maintaining the approximately 23 Natural Areas covering 1,213 acres in Billings with the most well-known and well-used of these areas being Phipps and Riverfront Parks. In these areas, we maintain sustainable vegetation of native species and work to eliminate invasive plants. Buckthorn at Riverfront Park and Russian Olive and Salt Cedar anywhere there is water are the largest threats and the most challenging to maintaining ecologically congruent natural areas. We also work hard to control other invasives such as leafy spurge, poison hemlock and houndstongue, among others. Natural Areas are managed using almost exclusively grant funds and volunteer labor.



210
Trees Planted



1,200+
Trees Watered



900
Trees Pruned



58
Trees
Removed



1,240
Trees
Inspected



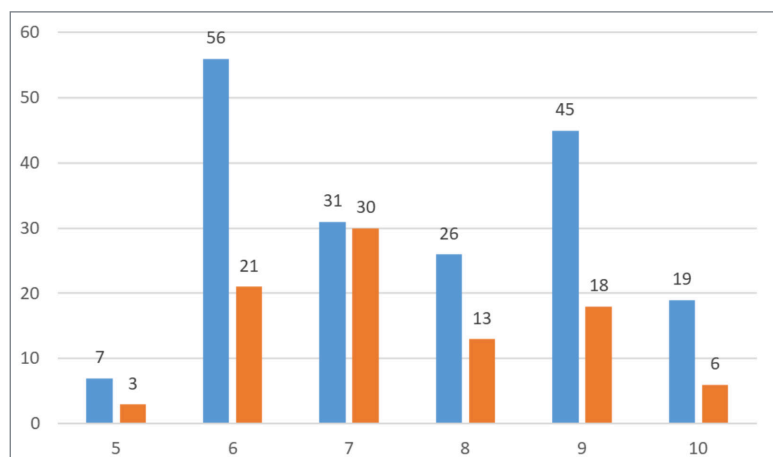
Urban Forestry and Natural Areas

Weed Abatements

The Forestry Division has been assisting Code Enforcement with mowing and clearing weed abatements for the last 10 years. once a notice arrives to PRPL staff is sent out to clear and mow the property. The property owner is invoiced by Code Enforcement for staff's time. This program has been a very successful partnership, Code Enforcement has dependable service and the Forestry Division is allotted 2 more seasonal positions to assist when not doing weed abatement.

The 2022 Weed Abatement Program the busiest ever since PRPL took over mowing for Code Enforcement. In all 150 properties were mowed or otherwise treated in 2022. In addition 34 others properties that had been reported, but which property owners either treated or agreed to mow.

The graph below shows the number of weed abatement cases treated in 2022 (in blue and the left column of each pair) and 2021 (in orange and the right column in each pair). The numbers at the bottom are months of the year, as follows: 5 = May, 6 = June, 7 = July, 8 = August, 9 = September and 10 = October.



Tree Planting Planning

Based on the success of small ponderosa pines in our dryland areas - those planted last spring in Phipps, Ironwood, Copper Ridge, Falcon Ridge, Mission, and Descro - we plan to get more than 200 3'-high plugs of pines and other conservation-style plantings from DNRC Conservation Nursery for spring '23. We will be planting along trails on the west-end that are managed by Parks and Recreation running through Ironwood subdivision and Falcon Ridge as well as the trail running through Southgate, and possibly Lampman. Some of these sites do not have irrigation so will need regular watering with a water truck. In addition we will be adding up to 60 trees in Centennial where next year's Arbor Day will be held.



Urban Forestry and Natural Areas

Riverfront Buckthorn Removal

Riverfront Park is a crown jewel of the Billings Natural Area Parks system with nearly two miles of access to the Yellowstone River, a stately overstory riparian forest with understory shrubs and native grasslands. It is officially listed as a “birding hotspot” and some birdwatchers call it one of the best birding spots in Montana because of the diversity of habitats present: ponds, wetlands, forest, shrub-covered savannahs, grasslands, river side-channel sloughs and riverine habitat among others. Beyond birders, it is also an excellent place for picnics, photography, kayaking and canoeing, fishing, swimming, cross-country skiing and hiking.

Riverfront Park is plagued, however, by a massive invasion of Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) which covered most of the eastern two-thirds of Riverfront Park. The PRPL started trying to control buckthorn in 2019 and experimented with techniques commonly used in other areas, most effective of which was to have crews go in and cut buckthorn with saws, loppers or pruners and then treat the stump with an herbicide. This approach was seasonally limited, slow, labor-intensive and left massive piles of above-ground slash to be treated. So, another approach was needed.

PRPL was contacted by a local contractor that had acquired equipment used mainly to thin overly dense forests created by decades of fire-exclusion from forested landscapes that once burned every few years. This equipment was readily adapted to cutting through dense buckthorn, working around and leaving intact, trees and shrubs that will form the basis for a new forest comprised of native vegetation that we will nurture into being over the next several years.

The total treatment area was 30 acres. Buckthorn seeds remain viable in the soil for several years so buckthorn re-sprouting from stumps and thousands and thousands of buckthorn seedlings will emerge. Limited trials have shown buckthorn to be susceptible to commonly used herbicides so we are confident in our ability to control buckthorn through chemical and mechanical means. We look forward to the challenge of reintroducing native shrubs, forbs and herbs back into this unique riparian system and rebuilding a trail system through the area.



Urban Forestry and Natural Areas

The Life of a Tree

Trees arrive to Billings Parks already 3 to 14' tall! These trees have been grown in nurseries and then shipped to us, often from hundreds, sometimes thousands of miles away. Trees arrive in different forms. First to arrive each year are "bare root" trees. These trees are exactly as they sound – they have a bare root. No soil attached. These trees are quickly stored in mulch and kept moist and cool until they can be planted. These trees typically arrive in early April and depending on if snow is melted and ground is thawed, trees are planted as soon after arrival as possible and safely in the ground as temperatures warm and the tree roots expand into the soil and leaves emerge to provide energy for the tree as it settles into the park it was meant to be in.



Trees that arrive later in the spring, or in the fall, have the roots set in containers of varying sizes and the crowns of trees are fully leafed-out. These trees are also usually planted as quickly as possible depending on the weather. If trees arrive during the growing season we will sometimes have to wait for cooler weather before we can safely put trees out into the elements. Because they are in containers, trees can be stored for some time provided they are kept cool and well-watered, but it is still best to plant these as soon as possible so that trees can work on root growth and development in their new home.



Sometimes soils are rocky or have clay layers that are difficult to dig through with hand shovels and sometimes we have more trees to plant than we have the manpower to plant using hand tools only. In those cases we use an auger to dig holes, making our work easier and providing the trees planted with light, fluffy, malleable soils that it is easier for trees



to get their roots into. We often utilize volunteers to plant our trees and in this case, there are a couple of young fellows helping one of their neighborhood chums earn his Eagle Scout by organizing a tree planting event at Rimrock West Park.

We add mulch to trees as we plant them. This covering of organic matter (wood chips) provides a ring around trees that is a visual reminder to lawn mowers to keep their distance and avoid smashing into trees. Damage from lawn mowers is one of the leading causes of mortality to young trees! Equally or more importantly, the layer of organic material holds in moisture causing trees to require less water than they otherwise would. The mulch also, over time, provides nutrients to the soil and it can reduce temperatures around the stem and roots that trees might otherwise experience. With almost 1000 trees planted in the last 5 years or still small enough to coddle, we go through a LOT of mulch every year and deliver it to parks around town by the dump truck full. Summers in Billings can be HOT as anyone who has gone through the last two summers here can attest. Heat adds to a



trees water demand and the hot, dry weather we experience here puts water in even greater demand. While parks are almost entirely irrigated, they are watered for the needs of grass, not the needs of trees and we supplement that by giving trees a long, deep soak periodically, getting water deep down into their roots and sustaining them by supplementing the irrigation water or intermittent rainfall that they may get.

Trees need other care as well – staking and fencing for example, usually done at planting, and pruning as the tree grows. But we hope this gives you some impression of "The Life of a Tree" and the work that goes into keeping them happy, green and alive.

FORESTS IN CITIES BILLINGS, MT



FORESTS
IN CITIES



What Are Forested Natural Areas?

Across the United States, there are over a million acres of forest embedded in urban landscapes. Unlike other parts of the urban forest, like street trees or trees found in landscaped parks, "forested natural areas" refers to a type of urban forest that looks and feels like the woods. These forests offer vast social, ecological, climate, and economic benefits to cities. The protection and care of these valuable resources is critical to ensure healthier people and healthier cities.

The Forests in Cities Network

The Natural Areas Conservancy's Forest in Cities Network was created in 2019 to promote and advance healthy forested natural areas in cities across America through science, management, partnerships, and communications. It is composed of expert teams of forest practitioners and advocates from 17 metro regions across the United States. The key program goals for this network are to 1) Nurture and grow a national network of experts 2) Advance urban forest science and practice and 3) Advocate for increased resources and support.

Urban Forestry and Natural Areas

Billing's Forests Are A Valuable Resource

Forested natural areas help keep cities cool, they provide critical habitat for native plants and animals. These spaces also provide safe access to nature for urban residents.

- Within the City of Billings, there are at least 2,001 acres of forested natural areas.
- More than 80% of forests in Billings are dominated by native species. Forests with native species offer more benefits such as providing habitat for local wildlife and sequestering and storing more carbon, and absorbing stormwater.

Billing's Forests Are Vulnerable

Urban forested natural areas face many common challenges. These places have limited formal protection from development and face multiple and magnified stressors due to the urban context. This includes, climate change, human impacts dumping, fires, invasive species, and deer browse.

- About 30% of Billing's forests have invasive species present, compromising forest health a productivity.
- Climate change poses significant threats to Billing's forests including flooding, wind, and changes in average temperatures.

2,001

ACRES OF FORESTED NATURAL
AREAS IN THE CITY OF BILLINGS

16

MILES OF TRAILS

They Need Care, Protection, and Investment

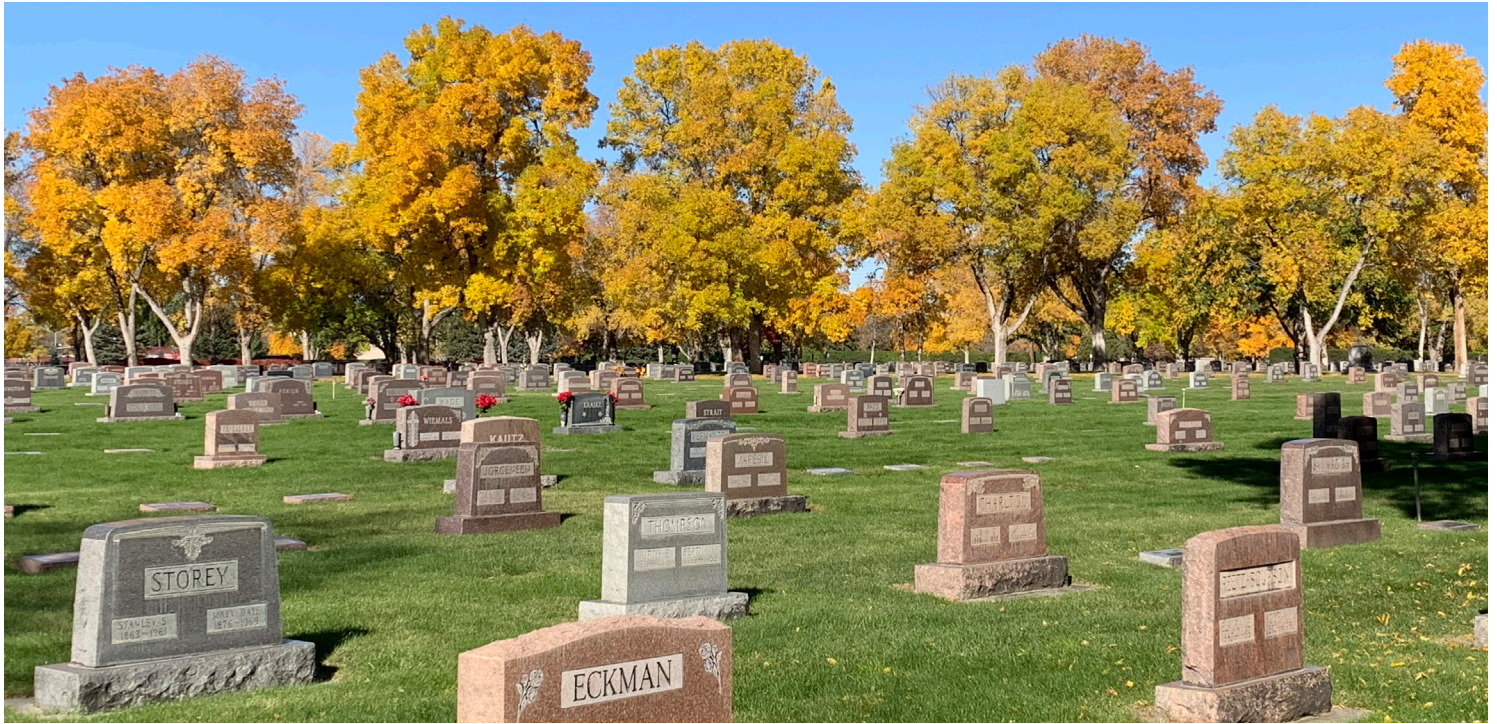
Like all types of parkland, forested natural areas require care to ensure the provision of ecological, economic, and social benefits. More funding, awareness, and resources are needed. In Billings, City of Billings, Yellowstone River Parks Association, Yellowstone County, Bureau of Land Management, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, along with other civic organizations and volunteers collectively care for forested natural areas.

- The Department of Parks, Recreation and Public Lands actively managed 200 acres of natural areas and planted 193 trees in parks in fiscal year 2020-2021.
- The City of Billings also relies on volunteer programs and public-private partnerships to help care for these forests and recorded 127 volunteer hours in fiscal year 2020-2021.

Mountview Cemetery

Mountview Overview

Mountview Cemetery is committed to providing the community an attractive, peaceful sanctuary to celebrate and commemorate the lives of our loved ones. It is also used daily by walkers, joggers, and people wishing to view birds and wildlife. Mountview Cemetery is the oldest continually operated cemetery in the area. It includes the old Billings Cemetery that was run privately beginning in the late 1800s. With over 25,000 interments, the cemetery is the largest in the state of Montana. Buried in Mountview Cemetery are many individuals influential to our regions history. Staff work year round to assist families with funeral services for their loved ones. In addition to the burial services, cemetery staff work diligently to keep the 65 acres of grounds in pristine condition.



Personnell Overview

Mountview Cemetery went through a number of changes this year. The Parks/Cemetery Supervisor left in June, with the new supervisor starting August 31st. Earlier this year, one of the two Equipment Operators took a position with the Parks Division and a new Equipment Operator was hired. A 50% change in staff has created challenges, as well as opportunities to grow.

Operational Review

2022 ended on par with previous years at Mountview Cemetery. A total of 118 interments was in line with our previous 8 year average. Grave and niche sales also remained steady. Casket burials made up 36% of total interments, which is right at our recent average as well.



Mountview Cemetery

Irrigation Line Repair

The cemetery has made several irrigation system repairs this year. Most notably the main line that runs from the irrigation ditch and supplies Mountview and Sunset Cemetery's, Par 3 Golf Course, and Sacagawea Park, required repair last spring. Another spot in the line started leaking this fall and will need to be fixed in the spring of 2023. This is noteworthy as the line runs under Central Avenue, making repairs difficult and costly. As the system ages and the rubber seals continue to deteriorate more leaks can be expected at an increasing rate.



Memorial Day

Many community members attended the 2022 Memorial Day celebration. The event was again planned in cooperation with the Friend of the Yellowstone National Cemetery and was supported by a myriad of Veteran's organizations. A flag ceremony, taps, speeches and wreath laying were all featured during the program.



Cemetery Events

In addition to the Memorial Day celebration, the cemetery hosted a variety of events in 2022. The Western Heritage Center held several walking tours in the cemetery. The Yellowstone Historical Society once again collaborated with the cemetery to hold "Voices of the Past", featuring actors portraying a diverse mix of historical figures buried in the cemetery. Lastly, the cemetery held a holiday wreath laying event in the Veteran's sections. Kathy Gordon, a Gold Star Mother, planned and coordinated this event with the cemetery staff to honor Veterans.

Nickolas Goettel portraying Frank Bell
photo provided by Yellowstone Historical Society



Mountview Cemetery

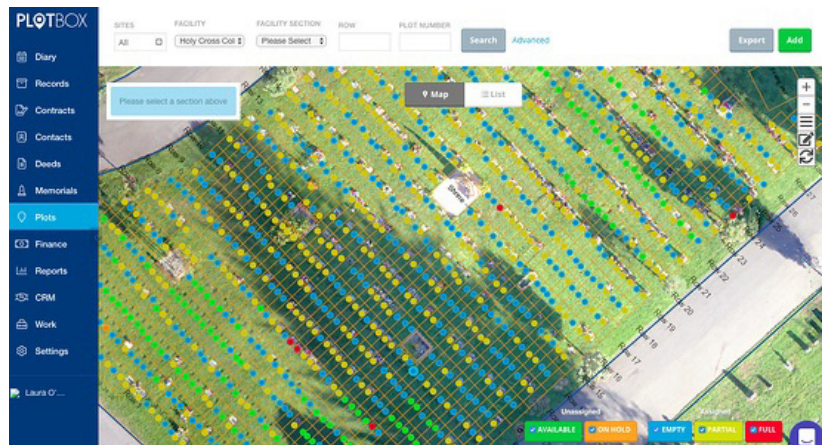
Section 15 Expansion

Section 15 is the last undeveloped section in Mountview Cemetery. The six acre area is designed to have 456 lots with roughly 3,650 graves. At current levels of service this area will become necessary in 4 to 6 years. During 2022, cemetery staff continued preparing the site for future use. In cooperation with the Forestry Division, and aided by 12 volunteers, staff planted a variety of 32 deciduous and pine trees. Additionally, staff completed the placement of lot markers. Staff intends to begin seeding in the spring of 2023, with the goal of selling graves in 2026. Additionally the current irrigation system design will need to be modified to include a new pump station, to be installed fall 2023, and additional irrigation lines.



PlotBox

Mountview Cemetery has partnered with PlotBox to install a new cemetery management system. The new system will replace our antiquated AS-400 database. When online PlotBox will significantly reduce the cemetery's administrative burden as well as IT's need to maintain the AS-400. PlotBox will also improve the community's cemetery experience, as it will allow them to easily look-up and locate friends and family interred at Mountview. Transitioning began in November and we expect the new system to be on-line in summer or 2023.



Mountview Cemetery

Ground Penetrating Radar

There are a variety of areas in the Old Billings Cemetery where burials have happened but the records of where the graves are located or even who is buried there are incomplete or sometimes never recorded. Using ground penetrating radar, aerial survey techniques, and the expertise from Montana State University Billings History Professor, Thomas Rust, a map is being created of these areas. The map won't tell who is buried where, but will provide locations of the unrecorded graves. Providing even more interesting history at the Cemetery.



42 Full Burials

75 Cremation Burials

1 Infant Burial

118 Total Burials

1 Veteran Grave

41 Immediate Use Sales

45 Future Use Sales

4 Contract for Deed



Headstone Repairs

In March, a group of Occupational Students from University of Mary helped with a headstone raising project at Mountview Cemetery. Many of the headstones located in the older areas of the cemetery have begun to sink and become overgrown by the turf. University of Mary students have made volunteering with the department an annual tradition and this year they helped raise 36 headstones at the cemetery. In addition cemetery staff continued to work on repairing old headstones throughout the cemetery. Many of the damaged headstones are made of materials that do not tolerate decades of exposure to the elements. In 2022, staff repaired 16 headstones.





Billings

PUBLIC WORKS



Excellence
Innovation
Integrity

Department Report

...from the heart of Billings

2.1.2023



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- 14 Public Works in the Community

a letter from the director



Remember when you used to hear 2023 and it seemed so futuristic? Well, here we are. I can say that some of the things we imagined would happen in our industry 20 years ago have happened. We have real time information on where we've plowed snow. We have computers in our vehicles that can find locations and give us directions. We pull up plans in the field and can add data to the entire system from anywhere.

While all this technology has made things more efficient (in theory anyway), what has not changed is that everything requires people. Like everyone knows, getting enough people to do the work has been tough. The good news is for about 3 days last fall, we were fully staffed! And yes, it was only 3 days but it's a move in the right direction.

Our focus this year is on maintaining our dedicated team, who are essential to providing quality services to the Billings community. With a strong workforce and advanced resources, we're looking forward to a successful year ahead!

Debi Meling

Public Works Director

City of Billings LEED-ing the Way for the Region



"WHAAAAAT?" has been a typical response when people hear that **Billings is now among the 21 Cities & Communities GLOBALLY to achieve LEED® Gold recognition.** We don't blame anyone for being surprised. It's one of those situations where we don't realize how lucky we are to call Billings home till someone else points it out! For that we have our Energy & Conservation Commission to thank.

Though some of the Commission members couldn't make photo day, you can learn about the Commission's phenomenal efforts for the last two years and some of the projects that scored Billings the points for progress toward **Sustainability and Quality of Life!** It is also a promise to uphold LEED standards to benchmark performance and communicate improvements moving forward! More on the Energy & Conservation Commission's great work at www.billingsmtpublicworks.gov/237/Boards-Commissions.



Winning at Sustainability & Standard of Living

In October 2022, the City of Billings achieved LEED® Gold certification for implementing practical and measurable strategies and solutions aimed at improving sustainability and the standard of living for residents. This accomplishment measures and tracks outcomes and is evaluated against key metrics that include energy, water, waste, transportation, education, health, safety, prosperity, and equitability. Here are some representative projects.



Water Efficiency

It takes a lot of electricity to treat and move water. About 70% of the electricity consumed by our municipal facilities comes from either the water or wastewater system. This is why we have focused on **state-of-the-art efficiency technologies** at both the water and wastewater treatment plant. Among other efficiency projects, the City was **awarded \$90,000 in utility energy efficiency rebates** for low energy wastewater technologies that will **save \$57,300 in annual electric costs**. The water rate structure also **incentivizes citizens to be smart about conserving water** by increasing the cost per gallon as their use increases.

Innovation

The **Shiloh Conservation Area** serves Billings in multiple ways, and it is first of its kind in Montana. Its award-winning design takes advantage of nature's ability to filter pollutants out of stormwater runoff. It provides much-needed flood control for the west end of Billings. It also preserves recreational & educational opportunities for the community while Billings continues to grow.



Green Spaces

Access to, and immersion in, nature and green spaces promotes physical and mental health of a community. Billings has an incredibly equitable distribution of public open and green spaces. In fact, over 99% of residences in Billings are within ½ mile of a trail, park, or other open/green space comparing to LEED for Cities requirement of 70%. Billings also boasts **1,359 square feet of green space per resident**, again topping the LEED requirement of 861 square feet per capita.



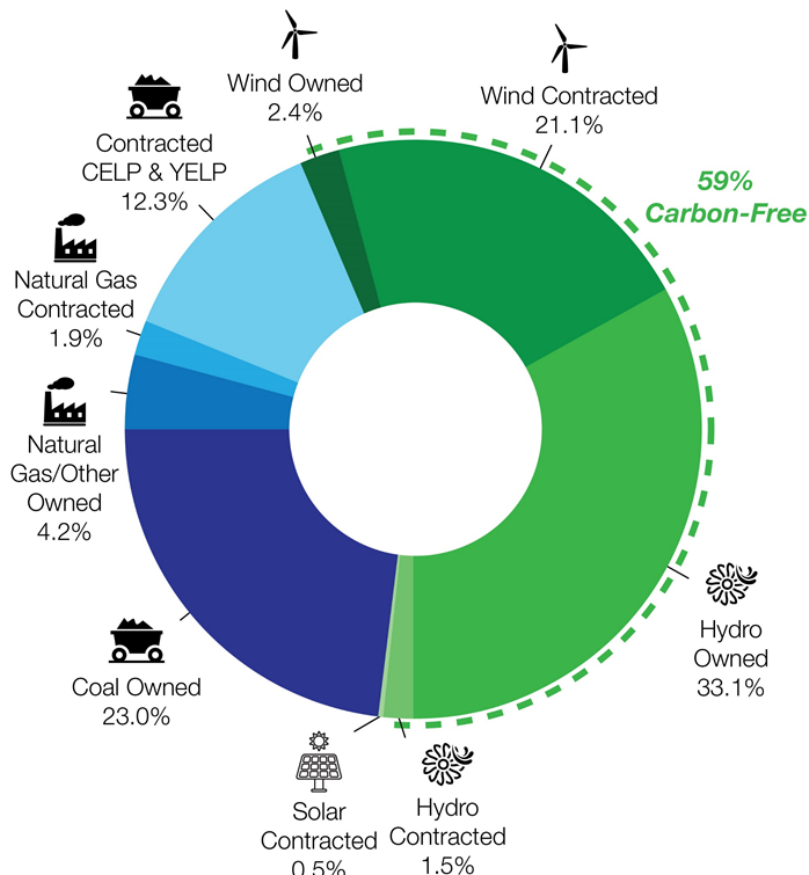
Solid Waste Management

In partnership with Montana-Dakota Utilities, raw landfill methane is processed into pipeline quality renewable natural gas at the Billings Regional Landfill. The production facility has been operational since December 2010 and has been highly reliable. Renewable natural gas produced over plant life is enough to provide heat and hot water to approximately 17,100 Montana homes for one entire year. As of end of 2021, a **total of \$3,518,939 royalty revenue** has been generated through the MDU agreement. This revenue contributes directly to the City's general fund.



NORTHWESTERN ENERGY'S MONTANA 2021 ELECTRIC GENERATION PORTFOLIO

BASED ON MWH OF OWNED AND LONG-TERM CONTRACTED RESOURCES



Energy Efficiency

The City has long been a leader in energy efficiency, sustainability and cost saving efforts. LEED Cities provide a framework and process to continue and build on the City's past efforts. Historically, the City has implemented 168 energy efficiency projects, estimated to save 9.4 million kWh/year, equal to about **\$815,448/year in annual electric cost savings** based on current rates. These included 143 lighting, electric equipment, VFDs and special projects that received \$1,222,416 in NorthWestern Energy (NWE) E+ Program incentives. In addition, the City utilized \$706,571 in Large Customer Universal Systems Benefit (USB) credits for 25 projects.

Learn more about some other projects that earned Billings LEED for Cities Gold certification on the following page and visit BillingsMT.gov/3097/LEED-for-Cities-Gold.

Solar Light vs. Montana Winter



Speaking of being recognized as the VERY FIRST CITY in Montana to achieve LEED Gold status for sustainability, we have installed the City's first solar powered light this January in the Shiloh Conservation Area (SCA) located West of Shiloh Rd and South of Montana Sapphire Dr.

How does it work?

These particular lights are programmed to shine at a lower percentage of light until motion triggers it to illuminate up to full capacity. Currently it is set at 30%. The lower power allows it to run all night, yet still provide the light necessary when people are nearby.

What are the pros & cons?

Cost of the solar light at \$4,200 might be over twice of a standard direct bury pole which is \$1,800+ depending on the style. The benefits, however, are prevalent. There's no need to trench in power, no monthly power bills, no disturbing areas surrounding the pole, and of course moving the pole is much easier. Learning from other Cities that have had these solar lights for 10 years, they require little to no maintenance.

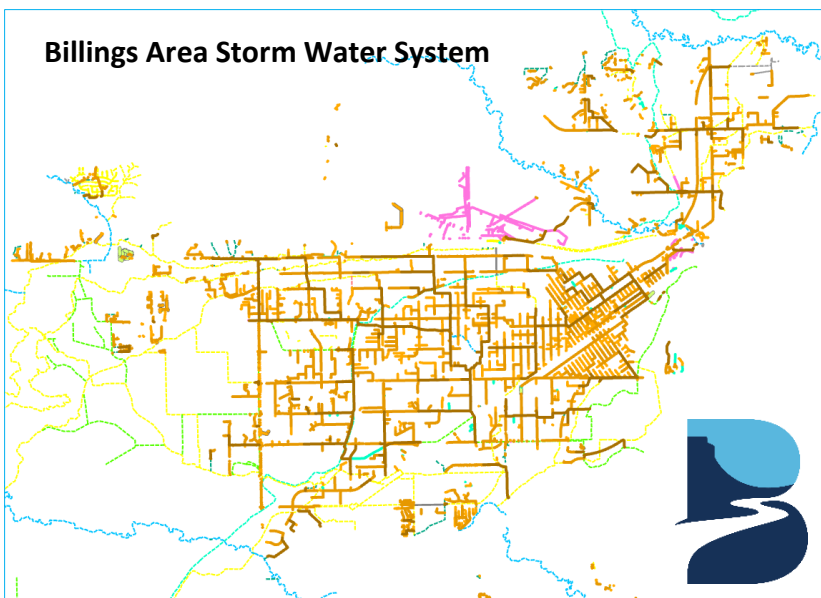
Will there be more?

We are trying out this light to assess its performance in this Montana winter given the angle, intensity, hours of the sunlight available. That and there might be snow piling on top of the solar panel. Please follow us on Facebook and other social media platforms for future updates on its performance and our plans for adding more solar in Billings.

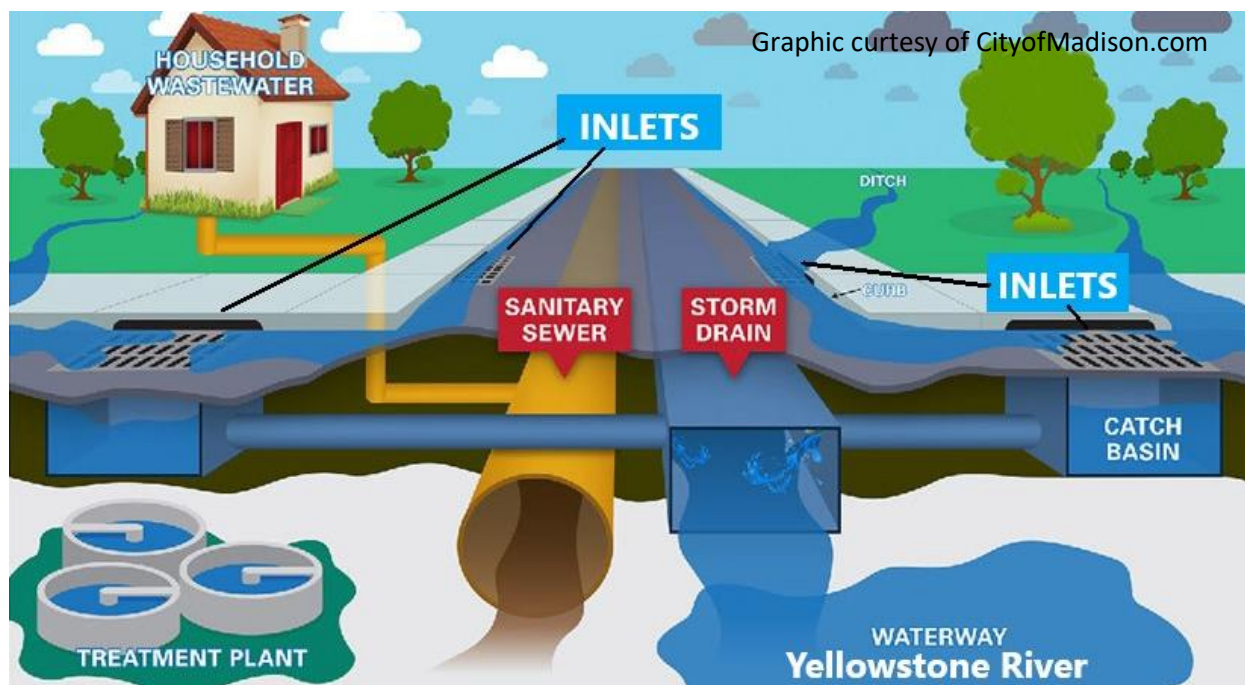
Keeping Pollutants Out of the Yellowstone River with the Help of Geographic Information System

If you live in Billings yet haven't thought about the **290+ miles of Storm Water mains** with **9000+ inlets and catch basins** recently or ever, it's not your fault. It is the massive hidden infrastructure beneath the city streets that channel untreated storm water runoffs into our waterway, the beloved Yellowstone River.

One can imagine the amount of time and resources needed to maintain the system and keep the Yellowstone River clean from manmade pollutants such as lawn fertilizers, pet waste, yard waste, motor oils, etc. Luckily, we have technology powered the Geographic Information System (GIS) that provides time saving paperless and data sharing benefits to help with this monumental task.



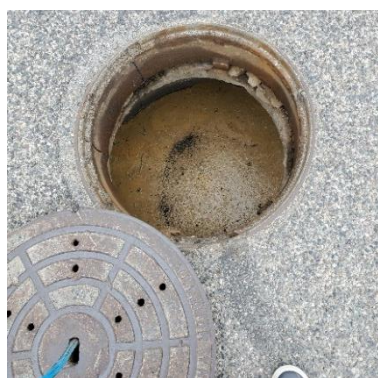
Shades of orange on the map above indicate the sizes of City owned mains while pink is State or County.



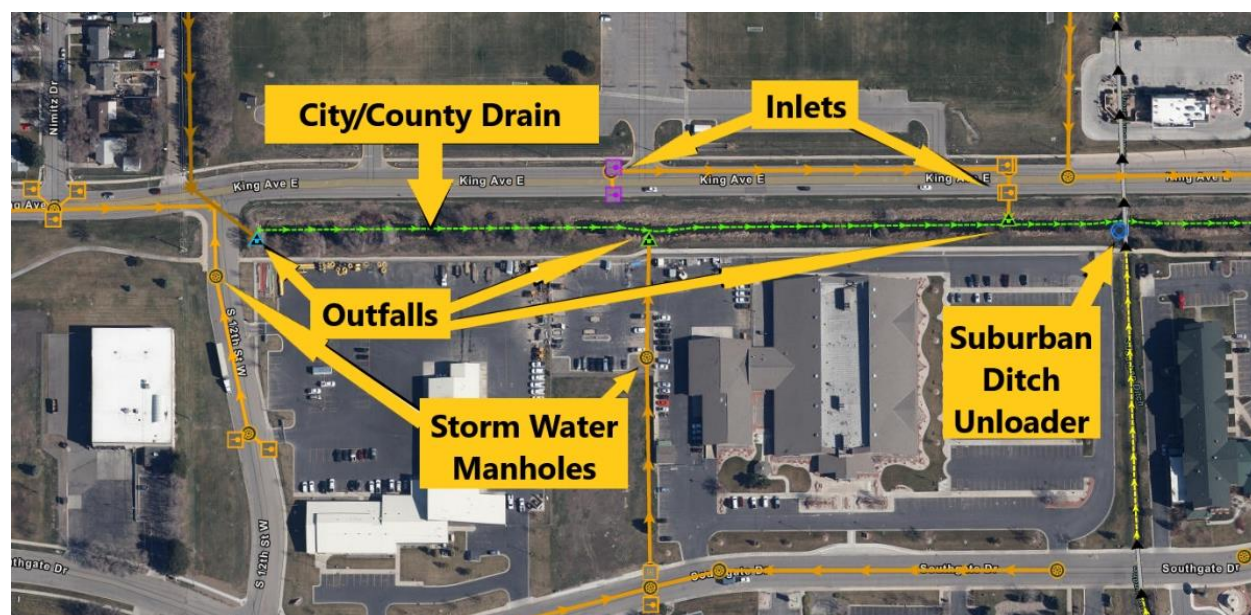
Environmental Affairs has been working with the GIS Department to transform paper workflows into digital workflows that are more efficient while promoting data sharing internally.

Environmental field inspections, for example, used to require carrying hard copies of maps and reports. Through collaboration with GIS, maps, data, and previous reports are easily accessible using a tablet. The digital workflow generates electronic forms that can be filled out onsite and directly uploaded into our data base eliminating the step of entering data at the office.

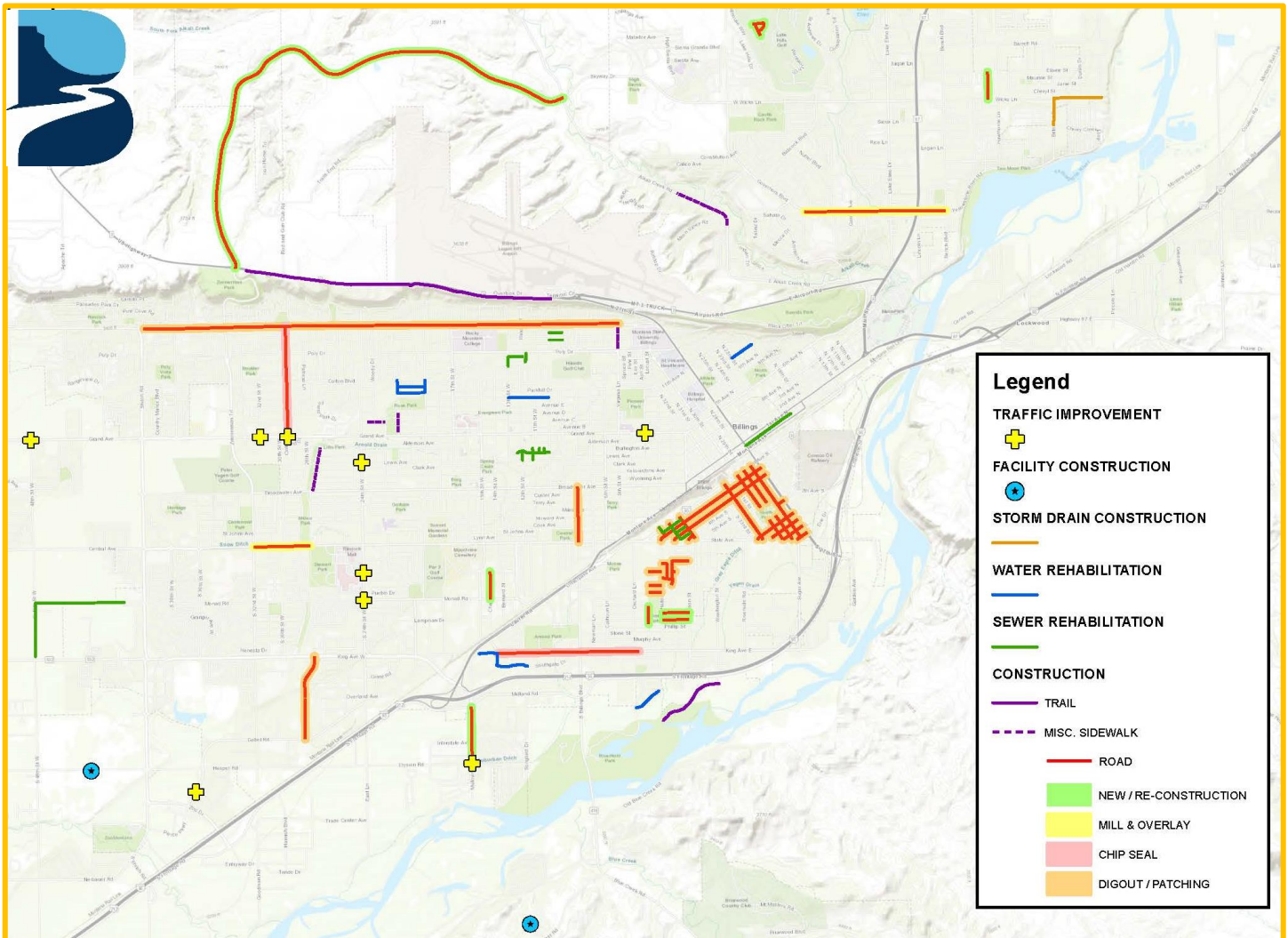
For example, one of the requirements under the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), is dry weather inspections of outfalls. We look for signs of Illicit Discharges, AKA, anything that should not be dumped down the storm drains. These Illicit Discharges can then be traced back to the source (shown in photos below).



The Environmental Affairs team can now fill out outfall inspection report and attach photos to the report in the field. Once we return to our office, the report and photos are linked to the specific points on our GIS map with storm water assets identified as shown on the screenshot below. This makes it easier for us to conduct investigation, track potential sources of illicit discharges, and keep our waterway clean.



2023 Construction Season Project Spotlights



Traffic Improvements

- Traffic signal at Gabel Rd/Broso Valley (SID-Special Improvement District)
- 48th St W and Grand Ave intersection improvements and traffic signal
- Final construction of traffic signal at Grand Ave and 32nd St W
- Completion of signal equipment upgrades on 24th St W

Storm Drain Projects

- Bitterroot Dr storm drain main extension from Cherry Creek Loop N to Wicks Ln and East on Wicks Ln to the City outfall point
- Grand Ave and 3rd St - Replace storm inlets and traffic signal conduit, cabinet, and controller

Water Replacement

- Water main loop from Arlington to Grey Eagle Ditch on S Frontage Rd
- Water Replacement Project Areas
 - 19th St W – Coltan Blvd to Park Hill
 - 21st St W – Coltan Blvd to Park Hill
 - Park Hill – 19th to 21st St. W.
 - Beverly Hills – 19th to 21st St. W.
 - Avenue F – 10th to 13th St. W.
 - King Ave E – West of Parkway Lane
 - Parkway Lane – King Avenue East to Southgate Drive
 - Southgate Drive – Parkway Lane to S. 12th St. W.

Sewer Replacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monad Sewer—trunk sewer extension from Shiloh Road west along Monad Road to 48th Street West and south to King Avenue West - Sewer Replacement Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ponderosa – Rimrock Rd to BBWA ▪ Burlington Ave – 10th St W to 13th St W ▪ 12th St W – Lewis Ave to Burlington Ave ▪ Romelda Ln – North of Burlington Ave to end of street ▪ Wunnicke Ln – North of Burlington Ave to end of street ▪ Cottage Ln – Lewis Ave to end of street north of Burlington Ave ▪ Alley Between Yale Ave and Princeton Ave from Wisconsin St to Michigan St ▪ Alley Between Princeton Ave and Harvard Ave from Wisconsin St to Michigan St
Trail & Sidewalk (Multi-modal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Riverfront Trail and New Bridge Over City-County Drain will connect Riverfront Park to the S Frontage Rd and developing properties with an end goal to create a loop to Garden Ave - Miscellaneous pedestrian crossing improvements based on the Safe Routes to School Plan - Annual Missing Sidewalk Program—Add missing sections of Sidewalk along Virginia Ln, Alkali Creek Rd, 12th St W, 21st St W, and Parkview Ln in support of Safe Routes to School recommendations and arterial streets - Annual small concrete program—repair tripping hazards on areas of sidewalks
Street Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of Mallowney Ln from Elysian Rd to Midland Rd, including multi-modal improvements (sidewalk and trail) and an improved intersection at Elysian Rd and Mallowney Rd with traffic signal - PAVER Street Preservation Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chip Seal of Rehberg Ln from Grand Ave to Rimrock Rd ▪ Chip Seal of King Ave E from Parkway Ln to Orchard Ln ▪ Mill and Overlay of Central Ave from BBWA Canal to 32nd St W ▪ Mill and Overlay of Hilltop Rd from Bazaar Exchange to Bench Blvd ▪ Separated bike lanes will be added to Hilltop Rd from Main St to Bazaar Exchange and Rehberg Ln from Grand Ave to Rimrock Rd - Brewington Dr, street reconstruction and storm drain improvements - SBURA Streets, Ryan Ave, Morgan Ave and Stephens Ln—water main replacement, storm drain, and gravel street reconstruction with sidewalk additions - Inner Belt Loop and Skyline Trail, 5 miles of new street and multi-modal trail connecting Highway 3 to Alkali Creek Rd - Charles St—Replacement of antiquated water main, sewer main, and new storm drain as part of gravel street reconstruction to paved City street (SID)
Solid Waste Facility Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of the first composting facility at the landfill, designed to lengthen the life of the landfill by composting green waste and wastewater plant biosolids - Slope stability improvements at the landfill - Scale addition to improve efficiency - Household waste building addition to better deal with household wastes (chemicals, oily products)

* Certain projects are subject to change dependent on Council approval



ACEC (American Council of Engineering Companies) of Montana presented the City of Billings Nutrient Upgrade, Expansion and Improvements project with the 2023 Engineering Excellence Grant Project Award

The HDR team led the design of one of the largest public works projects for Billings. They transformed a \$250 million new secondary treatment facility design into a \$65 million revitalization of the existing facility. HDR increased the wall height of existing secondary clarifiers, allowing them and the existing aeration basins adequate volume for the new treatment process. They also repurposed the main secondary treatment complex tunnel to house blowers, freeing the old blower room for use as chemical storage and feed facilities. This eliminated the need to construct a new chemical building.

The new treatment process uses biology instead of chemicals to remove phosphorus. This is not only environmentally friendlier but avoids the costly use of chemicals and subsequent dewatering and disposal of chemical sludge. Their effort touched nearly every facility at the plant. To harmonize these efforts, they combined LIDAR scanning with building information modeling, which represented the new work in 3D while using the laser scans in the background.

The project not only met the City's requirements but complied with permit requirements for discharging water into the Yellowstone River, a strong fishery and highly utilized recreational river that serves many communities throughout the state.

Out with ALL Lead Service Lines

The City of Billings is committed to delivering safe, affordable, and high-quality water to our residents. The water we provide is lead free, but lead can get into the water as it moves through lead-containing solder, faucets, fittings, and service lines – the pipe that brings water into the home from the water main in the street.

The City is in the process of identifying the location of lead materials within the distribution system. Identifying the locations of all lead service lines in our water system is critical and we cannot do this without our residents' help. If you've received water service line survey in the mail, please follow the instructions and contact our Water Quality division at 406-247-8503 to let us know or take the [Service Line Inventory Survey](#) online.



Step 1. Find your water meter to locate your service line

The water meter is usually found in the basement, near the main water shut-off valve. This shut-off valve is located where your water service line comes into your home. If you are having trouble locating the water meter, you may want to check your furnace room, utility room, or near your hot water tank. Water meters can occasionally be found in crawl spaces.

Step 2. Magnet test (a refrigerator magnet will work)

Hold a magnet to your service line. If a magnet will stick, you have a steel service line. If a magnet won't stick, you may have a lead service line. Proceed to the next step.

Step 3. Scraping test with a screwdriver or a coin

Scraping a copper pipe will reveal a shiny "new penny" color.
Scraping a galvanized steel pipe will reveal a silver/white color.
Scraping a lead pipe will reveal a silver/white color.



If your service line curves or has bulb on the end, your line is likely lead.



Photo Evidence of Fun and Engagement from the Community



Trail Celebration @ 32nd & Gabel Rd



Neighborhood Bike Tour



ACEC Engineering Excellence Award



Montana Planners Conference

Letting the community know about what we do and how we do it through outreach and engagement is important to us at Billings Public Works!

From inviting you to the ribbon cuttings of major community projects, to bringing you on a guided neighborhood bike tour in promoting active transportation, to teaching kids about our storm water system at the Saturday Live event and more, we hope to have many future opportunities to share, learn, and grow together. Please follow us on [Facebook](#) for future events!



Celebrating First Pedestrian Activated Beacon



Storm Water Demonstration @ Saturday Live

CONTACT US

Administration	406-657-8230
Engineering Services	406-657-8231
Environmental Affairs	406-247-8663
Solid Waste Services	406-657-8285
Street-Traffic Maintenance	406-657-8250
Utilities Customer Service	406-657-8315
After Hours Utility Emergency	406-657-8353

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Billings Heights Water District	406-252-0539
Montana-Dakota Utilities	406-896-4250
Northwestern Energy	888-467-2669

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

Date: January 31, 2023
To: Billings City Council
From: Jim Tevlin
Subject: SBURA report for the period July 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022

The following is a report from the South Billings Urban Renewal Association (SBURA) related to activities in the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District ("the District") for the period July 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022.

Administrative

Mike Mayott resigned his position as an at large board member and Secretary/Treasurer effective December 31, 2022. Mike stated that he needed to resign in order to become the president of the MetraPark Advisory Council. I advertised an open position in the Yellowstone County News for two weeks in December 2022. SBURA expects to fill this position in February 2023.

In August 2022, the SBURA board executed a contract for me to provide consulting services for the period July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023. My compensation is \$8,155 per month.

In October 2022, SBURA submitted its FY24-28 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). This CIP consists of those capital projects that SBURA reasonably believes will occur over the next five years. At present, these projects include \$2.62 million for upgrades to Morgan Ave, Ryan Ave, and Stephens Lane in FY24 and a "placeholder" of \$30 million for recreation center bonding in FY25.

Current Projects

Optimist Park – During the six months ended December 31, 2022, Parks & Rec spent an additional \$132,536 on improvements to Optimist Park, specifically for a covered picnic area. This project is essentially complete.

Unimproved Roads – As of December 31, 2022, Public Works has completed the improvements to Bruce Lane, Vaughn Lane, Hillview Lane, and Mitchell Ave at cost of approximately \$4 million. Public Works plans to improve Morgan Ave, Ryan Ave, and Stephens Lane, including parking on the western side of Optimist Park during the summer and fall of 2023. The estimated cost is approximately \$2,500,000.

South Billings Recreation Center – On October 17, 2022, Dusty Eaton with A&E Design presented its final design for the Recreation Center to the Billings City Council.

Key Takeaways:

1. The design called for a 177,045 sq ft facility consisting of:

- 4 full size courts
- 50-meter competition pool
- NHL-size ice rink
- Clip-N-Climb
- Leisure pool
- Party room
- Open fitness areas
- Concession
- Child watch area
- Support, administrative & locker rooms

2. Construction Cost: \$98,742,000

3. Cost Recovery: 74% (\$901,530 deficit)

Subsequently, the Recreation Center Core Committee requested that a second sheet of ice be included in the master plan. Accordingly, Dusty Eaton presented a revised master plan at the January 17, 2023, city council work session. The revised project cost is approximately \$113 million with a 78% cost recovery rate (\$772k annual deficit).

Private Investment – Note the following private investments completed or in progress during the six months ended December 31, 2022:

Newman Lane – Project Complete, \$55,945



Taco Johns – Project Complete, \$123,898



Billings School District #2 – Project Complete, \$100,000



Jackson Court Apartments – In Progress, \$547,305 (see below)



Jackson Court Apartments - Status Report - August 29, 2022

Jackson Court Apartments includes 38 units of affordable housing located at 510 Jackson Street

Work is proceeding according to plan with completion scheduled by Mid-April of 2023. First tenant occupancy is anticipated for mid-to-late May 2023. Landscaping will follow, to be completed by August 2023.

Currently the first of seven buildings, **Building A**, is enclosed and has passed City inspection allowing installation of interior finishes, cabinets, and mechanical and electrical systems. Siding and roofing for **Building A** will be completed in September.

Foundations on **Buildings B, C, and D** are now complete with framing and roofing underway. Concrete foundations for Buildings E, F and G are scheduled for September and October with framing, roofing and siding to follow.

Underground utilities are complete within the site boundary. Connections to City services in Jackson Street were made earlier this year. Grading, curb and gutter, sidewalks, and compaction of paving base-course for the south half of the site is proceeding in September with asphalt paving anticipated to be completed in early November.

Site work on the north half of the site, including the Jackson Street approach, playground area and dog park will start following the completion of building slabs for the buildings on the north side of the site.

South Frontage Rd Water Mains

During the six months ended December 31, 2022, Western Municipal Construction Inc completed the installation of water mains on the South Frontage Rd from Washington Ave to slightly west of Sugar Ave under private construction agreements with Torgerson LLC and KSKC Properties LLC. This project cost approximately \$750,000 with cost shared equally between Public Works and SBURA.

TPA Group LLC – In Progress, \$1,000,000 (see below)

Project completion expected in early 2023.

YouTube Drone Videos

Onsite Montana Spec Warehouse 08.11.2022 <https://youtube/A5oLusaKAWc>
Offsite Montana Utility Installation 08.11.2022 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIJnvhlqZ6E>

Wendy's – Project Complete, \$154,801

